

The Perils of Special Counsels / This Is Your ISIS on Drugs

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# Newsweek

JUNE 2, 2017 / VOL. 168 / NO. 20



**LOCAL MUSIC SCENE:** A musician arrives for the annual Mariachi Festival in Boyle Heights. Residents of the Los Angeles neighborhood are worried that art galleries will continue to displace local culture.

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**COVER CREDIT:** PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JON-PAUL PEZZOLO

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## BIG SHOTS

IRAN

### Let Us Spray

Tehran, Iran—Supporters of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani celebrate his re-election on May 20. Rouhani campaigned on a platform pledging that he would continue to open Iran's sluggish economy to international markets and expand personal freedom. "The landslide victory gives Rouhani a mandate he did not have during his first term," Cliff Kupchan, chairman of political risk company Eurasia Group, told *The Washington Post*. "He'll remain a centrist [but] will be more aggressive in pursuing reforms."



BEHROUZ MEHRI





## SAUDIA ARABIA

## A Date Which Will Live in...

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia—President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump are welcomed by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, right, at a royal palace on May 20. On his first overseas trip, Trump visited Saudi Arabia and Israel. Also on the itinerary were stops at the Vatican, Italy and Belgium. While political turmoil continued to roil Washington over his firing of FBI Director James Comey, the president announced a \$110 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia that he said meant “jobs, jobs, jobs” for the U.S.



BANDAR ALGALLOUD







## SOUTH KOREA

## Tanks for the Memories

Hwacheon, South Korea—An art installation featuring Korean War-era tanks bears a slogan saying “Peace All Around the World.” The installation is near the so-called Peace Dam, which is close to the demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea. Constructed intermittently between 1987 and 2005, the dam was designed to protect against flooding if North Korea decided to open its Imnam Dam upstream to damage the South. Tensions between the two Koreas were heightened again on May 22 when the North confirmed it had successfully test-fired a medium-range ballistic missile.



ED JONES







BIG  
SHOTS

INDONESIA

## Magma Carta

Beganding, Indonesia —Mount Sinabung spewed thick volcanic ash over North Sumatra province on May 19. In 2010, Sinabung roared back to life for the first time in 400 years. After another period of inactivity, it erupted once more in 2013 and has remained highly active since.



ICAN DAMANIK





# P A G E O N E

ISRAEL

POLITICS

KENYA

RUSSIA

JIHADIS

BUSINESS

## WHEN JUSTICE BLINKS

Independent investigations can lose sight of their original targets. I should know—I was embroiled in one

**IN THE MOVIES**, or on TV, it usually happens like this: A process server posing as a clumsy bike messenger slaps someone with a subpoena as he or she walks out of a deli. But it didn't happen that way in 2004, when I found myself in the middle of another special counsel investigation that threatened a Republican White House. Instead, I got a call from the FBI asking if I'd be willing to answer a few questions about an article I had co-authored for *Time* magazine, where I was a White House correspondent. I demurred, and after some back and forth with the counsel for the magazine's parent company, Time Inc., the feds simply faxed their subpoena to the lawyers. How boring.

What followed, however, wasn't boring. For over a year, I fought in court alongside Time Inc. to avoid revealing my discussions with sources in what came to be known as the CIA leak case. It's called that because the identity of a former covert intelligence operative, Valerie Plame, had been disclosed—a possible felony and something that reportedly damaged U.S. security and put lives in

danger. I didn't out Plame; that happened before I started writing about the case. But an administration official, Karl Rove, had disclosed her identity to me. Our appeals took more than a year and went all the way to the Supreme Court, which declined to hear our argument that I shouldn't have to testify against a source because of a privilege of confidentiality that is akin to that of physicians and clergy. During one appeals proceeding, I scribbled in my notebook: "*Je suis fucked.*" I wound up telling my story to a grand jury.

The CIA leak scandal engulfed Washington for four years and led to the conviction of Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, on charges of lying to the FBI and obstruction of justice. I was a witness at his trial. President George W. Bush commuted Libby's sentence, sparing him prison but still leaving the formerly powerful aide with a felony conviction and the loss of his law license.

I was prepared to go to prison to avoid testifying about my sources. I even enlisted a penal

BY  
**MATTHEW COOPER**  
[@mattizcoop](https://twitter.com/mattizcoop)





**SUPOENA SHOWER:** Patrick Fitzgerald, the special counsel in the CIA leak case, mostly handled it with professionalism—and mercy. But he, arguably, also went too far.



consultant, who counseled me on, among other topics, how to rebuff advances from fellow inmates at what was likely to be a dismal but not overly violent federal facility. (The answer was like something from *Cosmopolitan*: Say you're flattered and politely decline.)

Fortunately, my sources—Libby and Rove—granted me permission to testify about what they had told under cloak of confidentiality. But I still spent considerable time on the front page of *The New York Times*, even speaking live on CNN in front of the federal courthouse in Washington, D.C.

I bring up my case now because a special counsel pursued it, just like the current inquiry into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. That gives me some insight into what these things are like and the damage they can do—to both those caught in the maelstrom and the country at large. I was lucky that Time Inc. paid the enormous legal bills. But many of those who find themselves scrutinized by a special counsel, either as a witness, like me, or as a target, can end up bankrupt, their careers in ruins. That didn't happen to me, but I know the personal toll. Explaining it to my then-6-year-old son was heartbreaking.

That's to be expected, but when these investigations morph into sprawling searches for miscreants, the country suffers too. We should keep that in mind now, although the much-heralded former FBI Director Robert Mueller is running the probe into the Trump-Russia connection. Even lauded lawmen have gone too far as special counsels. To understand the current independent investigation, you have to go back to the Watergate era. In October 1973, President Richard Nixon ordered the firing of the Watergate special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, who tried to get the White House to hand over audiotapes of Oval Office conversations. Cox was fired, but his replacement, Leon Jaworski, convinced the Supreme Court to order Nixon to turn over the tapes. What they revealed: Despite his denials, the president had obstructed justice. Tell the FBI to "stay the hell out," Nixon ordered his aides in 1972, days after what his aides famously dismissed as a "third-rate burglary" at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C.

To make sure no president sacked a special prosecutor again, in 1978 Congress created a new category of outside prosecutor called



## A PENAL CONSULTANT COUNSELED ME ON, AMONG OTHER TOPICS, HOW TO REBUFF ADVANCES FROM FELLOW INMATES.

an "independent counsel," who would be appointed by a panel of judges from the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C. These men—and they were all men—had free rein without fear of being fired by the president.

Some independent counsels have used their mandated powers wisely. An investigation into a defense contracting bribery in the Reagan administration was tightly focused and led to indictments, but the prosecutor showed admirable



**GOLDEN TOUCH?**  
Even lauded  
lawmen have gone  
too far as special  
counsels. Many  
wonder if former  
FBI Director Robert  
Mueller will do  
the same with the  
Russia probe.

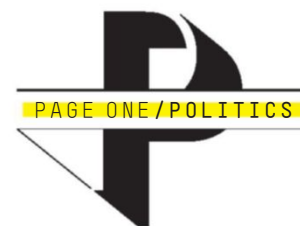
restraint, for instance, wisely using his discretion not to indict then-Attorney General Ed Meese, despite the pressure to perp-walk him.

Other special counsels have been criticized for being reckless with their huge budgets and wide discretion. Lawrence Walsh, who prosecuted the Iran-Contra affair during the late 1980s and early 1990s, indicted former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger just days before the 1992 presidential election in what many viewed as an effort to sway the election and punish Vice President George H.W. Bush, the GOP nominee. That indictment for false statements was dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired.

The most dreadful abuse of independent prosecutorial authority was by Kenneth Starr, who investigated the Whitewater land deal that Bill and Hillary Clinton made during the 1970s, when Bill Clinton was on his upward trajectory through Arkansas politics. Their investment property became an issue during the 1992 presidential election and in the early days of the Clinton White House. A federal investigation found no wrongdoing by the president, and congressional investigations found little evidence of malfeasance. But, under political pressure, Attorney General Janet Reno asked that judicial panel to appoint an independent prosecutor. It picked one counsel, dumped him and then chose Starr.

Starr was a respected jurist, but he had never been a prosecutor, and it showed. He went wildly afield from Ozarks real estate, leading critics to liken him to crazed Inspector Javert in *Les Misérables*, who chases Jean Valjean, the protagonist, for decades for stealing a loaf of bread. Starr delved into the suicide of Clinton counsel Vince Foster and even ensnared Arkansas's sitting governor, who had nothing to do with Whitewater, on an unrelated mail fraud charge. A breathless Starr also stuck his nose into a sexual harassment case that an Arkansas state employee, Paula Jones, brought against Bill Clinton when he was governor. A conservative activist planted a question about Monica Lewinsky into the Jones deposition, and the president's evasive answer eventually led to his impeachment. Clinton went on to serve the rest of his term, but it's little wonder Congress let the statute creating the independent counsel lapse in 1999. Which was fine with Starr: He later argued that the law that gave him his powers in this case was "constitutionally dubious" and "structurally unsound."

After the independent counsel law expired, Congress went back to the pre-1998 system, in which the Department of Justice appointed a special counsel, such as Watergate's Cox. That was true in the CIA leak case, which began in



2003, when conservative columnist Robert Novak outed Plame in his nationally syndicated column. The CIA was outraged and sent a criminal referral to the Justice Department.

The motive for the leak seemed to be revenge. In 2002, in the lead-up to the Iraq War, the agency had dispatched Plame's husband, former ambassador Joseph Wilson, to Niger to investigate a British claim that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was buying radioactive ore, known as yellowcake, from the impoverished African nation to build nuclear weapons. Wilson found no evidence of the British claim, but the Bush administration touted the Africa-Saddam connection anyway. In July 2003, Wilson went public with what he had found, and soon his wife was outed.

Democrats pressured the Bush White House to appoint a special counsel, arguing that it could not investigate itself. After the attorney general recused himself, it fell to the deputy attorney general to appoint a special counsel—just as it did in the Trump-Russia investigation. The deputy at the time: James Comey, who would later serve as FBI director until Trump dumped him. That controversial move led to Mueller's appointment as special counsel.

Patrick Fitzgerald, the U.S. attorney who was appointed special counsel in the CIA leak case, mostly handled it with professionalism—and mercy. He allowed me and another reporter caught up in the affair, Judith Miller, then of *The New York Times*, to pursue lengthy appeals.

But he, arguably, also went too far. Fitzgerald unmasked the original leaker quickly, but he found no malicious intent and decided not to prosecute him. At that point, he could have dropped the case. Instead, after hauling dozens of journalists into court as witnesses, including the late Tim Russert of NBC, he indicted only Libby. If the underlying crime of the leak was dismissed, was it worth the trouble and expense of putting the country through that for the sake of a conviction about lying?

Having faced time behind bars, I'm biased on that question. Of course, if Mueller's investigation nails who colluded with Moscow, that would be heroic. A treasure hunt for tangential targets? Please spare us. ■



## STEPMOTHER TONGUE

In Israel, Arabic has long been a quasi-official language. It may soon get a tacit demotion

**IN ISRAEL**, Arabic has long been taught in schools, spoken in the parliament and posted on road signs. It is not the official language, but neither is Hebrew, the mother tongue of most of the country. Instead, a law on the books since the British ruled the territory has mandated that all official correspondences be published in Arabic, English and Hebrew. (Israeli leaders removed English from that list after the country's independence in 1948.)

Yet Arabic may soon get a tacit demotion. On May 7, Israeli lawmakers approved the wording of a long-discussed bill that would define Hebrew as Israel's "national language." Days later, after a rowdy debate in the parliament, a majority of lawmakers voted for it. The legislation now faces two more hurdles before it officially becomes law, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ruling right-wing coalition strongly support it.

For Arab Israelis, who make up 20 percent of the country's population, the legislation strikes at the heart of their identity. For Jewish Israelis, it is about defining their own. The bill states that Israel "is the national home of the Jewish people" and declares that the "realization of national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people."

Such nationalistic language is why some celebrated the bill. Avi Dichter, the Israeli lawmaker who first proposed it, called upon a lyric from "Hatikvah," Israel's national anthem, in a

Facebook post on May 7, writing that it was "a big step toward establishing our identity, not only universally, but mainly toward ourselves, the Israelis, to be a free nation in our land."

In an email to *Newsweek* after the vote, Dichter, the former head of Israel's domestic security service, said the bill's "special status" for Arabic would only serve to create "a real infrastructure that can improve the status of the language." Neither Arabic nor its speakers "will be harmed by this clause."

Minority rights groups and opposition lawmakers strongly disagree. Ayman Odeh, chairman of the Joint List, Israel's largest Arab party, tweeted that Netanyahu was attempting to "destroy the status of the Arab population and exclude their culture and language."

Ahmad Tibi, one of Israel's most popular Arab politicians, agrees. "This is a racist nationalistic law whose purpose is to sideline the Arab minority," he says in a WhatsApp message written in Hebrew. "It is strange that 69 years after its establishment, the state of Israel is acting in such a demonstrable sense of insecurity."

Supporters of the bill say it's intended not to inflame tensions with Arab Israelis but to more firmly establish Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. They dismiss the criticism of Tibi and Odeh as coded language. "They are not defending the rights of the minority," says Avraham Diskin, a political scientist at the Hebrew

BY  
**JACK MOORE**  
@JFXM





**MIND YOUR LANGUAGE:** A teacher instructs children in the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by the Islamist group Hamas.

University of Jerusalem. “They are not ready to accept the status of Israel as a [Jewish] nation... which is the *raison d’être* of the state of Israel.”

Netanyahu’s government has long demanded that Arab Israelis, as well as Palestinians, recognize Israel as a Jewish state. The Palestinian Authority, which governs parts of the West Bank, has recognized Israel’s right to exist, but it objects to calling it a Jewish rather than a multi-ethnic state because of its large Arab population. (Hamas, the Islamist group that rules the Gaza Strip, has not recognized Israel and calls for the “liberation” of all of historic Palestine.)

The bill comes as a wave of violent attacks by Arab Israelis and West Bank Palestinians has led some Israeli leaders to accuse the country’s Arab population of working against the state. Many Arab Israelis disagree but claim they face widespread discrimination from the government. Aside from the bill, they point to Netanyahu’s Election Day warning to voters in 2015 that Arabs were “heading to polling stations in droves” (he subsequently apologized) and a proposed bill to limit the Muslim call to prayer

**“THIS IS A RACIST NATIONALISTIC LAW WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO SIDELINE THE ARAB MINORITY.”**

in Israel and East Jerusalem.

Either way, if the bill passes, some analysts say it will be another blow to Arab-Jewish co-existence—at a time when U.S. President Donald Trump is traveling to the region in hopes of reviving the moribund peace process.

“Having...Arabic...as an official language is a recognition that there is a minority that is a valued part of the society,” says Yossi Mekelberg, a fellow at the London-based think tank Chatham House.

Implicitly downgrading the language, he adds, sends a very different message to Israel’s Arabs: You do not belong here. ■



## A VIOLENT VOTE

# Election season in Kenya kicks off with ominous signs

**AS COMMUTERS** in the heart of Nairobi hustle past one another at the end of a recent workday, young men are buying machetes in a hardware shop before boarding a bus. The tools aren't for clearing brush or splitting firewood. Peter Mwangi, who runs an electronics shop, is arming himself in case of election chaos. "I know there will be violence," says Mwangi, holding a giant knife. "In the 2007 elections, we were not prepared. We were attacked, and I lost some of my relatives. But this time, it will not happen."

Mwangi says his shop was looted during the violence in 2007 following the election of Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, who is accused of taking power through vote-rigging. More than 1,300 were killed and about 600,000 were displaced from their homes during those protests.

Kenya next holds general elections on August 8. As the campaigning kicks off between incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga, the parallels to 2007 are striking. Back then, Odinga was running against Kibaki. Now, as then, suspicion of government election officials is high. The electoral commission and the courts lost credibility in the eyes of many in 2013, when the Supreme Court upheld Kenyatta's election as president, despite widespread allegations of fraud.

"We are going to win this election very early in the morning," says Kennedy Oluoch, who plans to vote for Odinga. "If they try to rig it again, like they did in 2013, Kenya will burn."

The country is polarized along ethnic lines. The

ruling party is determined to win a second term, while the opposition says it sees signs of plans to rig the vote and vows not to accept a stolen election. "The opposition will lose this election terribly and resort to violence," says Mwangi, who comes from Kenyatta's tribe. "But we will not accept them to disturb our peace and attack other tribes. We will retaliate if they try to attack us."

A report that Kenya's National Security Council presented to Parliament last year warned that the nation is teeming with weapons, including guns, machetes and spears. "It is estimated that there are between 580,000 to 650,000 illicit arms circulating in the country," reads the report.

In another report this year, the National Security Council warned that politicians are forming militias to protect themselves and cause trouble for their opponents. "The heightening political temperature in view of the 2017 general elections has seen the resurgence of criminal gangs, political goons and militias," the report states.

Kenya's political parties have been holding their primaries to select candidates to represent them in the general election in August. Already, trouble seen in the primaries has rekindled memories of 2007. Seven people have been killed in political violence so far. In one incident, men armed with machetes and whips attacked party officials and accused them of planning to rig the vote. Police later arrested 17 people and displayed the weapons they had confiscated.

"I see chaos, strife and bloodshed in the forthcoming general elections of a magnitude unheard



BY  
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**ILSE VAN ZIJL**  
[@IlsevanZijl](#)





**DÉJÀ VU?** When Kenyans return to the polls on August 8, many fear a wave of violence similar to the one the country saw during the 2007 elections.

of in Kenyan electoral history,” says Nazlin Umar Rajput, a Nairobi-based political analyst. “The violence and chaos evident in ongoing party primaries nationwide is clearly indicative of this.”

This East African nation votes largely along ethnic lines. According to Kenya’s National Bureau of Statistics, the largest native ethnic groups are the Kikuyu (6.6 million), the Luhya (5.3 million), the Kalenjin (5 million), the Luo (4 million) and the Kamba (3.9 million). They vote according to the dictates of their tribal kings, and political parties have formed alliances based on tribes. The Kikuyus and Kalenjins support the Jubilee Alliance of Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto. The opposition National Alliance is a union of tribes led by Odinga, a Luo from western Kenya, Musalia Mudavadi, a Luhya from western Kenya, and Kalonzo Musyoka from the Kamba tribe.

“There will be no peace in Kenya without Raila as the president,” says Oluoch, a Luo. “No way they can win this election with only two tribes.”

Analysts say ethnicity per se has never been the problem in Kenya. But “demagogues who capitalized on the emotions of their neglected and impoverished communities” have used ethnicity to rally their supporters, says Rajput.

Critics across Kenya’s 43 tribes have blamed the current government for corruption and raising the prices of basic commodities. Compared with only two months ago, now families are spending as much as twice the amount of money

on commodities like vegetables, maize flour, sugar, milk, electricity and even rent. Inflation has hit a four-year high, increasing from just under 7 percent in January to 9 percent in February because of fast-rising food and fuel prices, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

But hard times are unlikely to outweigh tribal allegiances, analysts say. Recently, eight politicians from both coalitions were arrested and charged with alleged hate speech and incitement to violence. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission, a government-funded independent body whose mandate is to crack down on hate speech, says that, as in the 2007 violence, certain radio stations are propagating an ethnic agenda. “We are extremely worried about what is going on,” Francis Kaparo, the chairman of the commission, said at a press conference.

Kenyatta has accused the opposition leader of trying to take advantage of violence. In 2007, Odinga was named the prime minister in a coalition government with Kibaki as the result of international pressure.

“Raila has again started inciting Kenyans, as he did in 2007,” Kenyatta said at a recent rally. “He was the one who ignited the flames that set Kenya on fire in 2007, when he promoted the politics of what he called 40 tribes against one. Now, he is talking about 40 against two.”

But Odinga rejected that charge, blaming Kenyatta and his allies for the 2007 violence. The Hague-based International Criminal Court investigated allegations against Kenyatta and his

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**“IF THEY TRY TO RIG IT AGAIN, LIKE THEY DID IN 2013, KENYA WILL BURN.”**

---

deputy, Ruto, for instigating violence in 2007, but the case was dropped due to insufficient evidence. “Uhuru’s desperation is understandable, as he is looking for something to hang on to re-energize his depressed 2013 voting bloc,” Odinga said in a statement.

Regardless of who is to blame, Mwangi, the voter buying a machete, believes nobody can stop the violence. “I know Raila can’t accept election defeat,” he says. “This will lead to violence between his tribe and ours. But we are prepared for this.” ■

## HOME, SWEET (GOVERNMENT-DEMOLISHED) HOME

# Moscow's plan to forcibly relocate a million Russians could fuel opposition to Putin

**UNTIL RECENTLY**, Elmira Shagiakhmetova, a businesswoman in Moscow, had never been to a protest. But on May 14, she and tens of thousands of middle-class Russians took to the streets to defend something very precious to them—their homes.

Moscow authorities plan to demolish at least 5,000 apartment blocks and rehouse around 1 million people in multistory residential towers. It's one of the largest resettlement programs in the world ever. Under legislation proposed by Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin, a member of President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party, residents of buildings slated for demolition will have no choice when it comes to their new apartments, and if they do not agree to move, they will be taken to court.

The impending program, critics say, has troubling implications for the future of property rights in Russia and has sparked widespread fury. "Why the hell would I want to move from the home that I've lived in my whole life to the 22nd floor of some badly constructed, hellish anthill?" Shagiakhmetova, who lives in a well-constructed apartment block a short drive from Moscow's iconic Gorky Park, tells *Newsweek*.

Many Moscow residents are also concerned because the legislation allows developers to sidestep regulations governing safety and ecological standards for residential buildings. It would also enable authorities to declare whole districts

"renovation zones," where any building can be demolished. People also fear they could be rehoused in areas far from public transportation.

Sobyenin says the demolitions are needed to upgrade Moscow's housing stock, but disgruntled residents allege the action is designed solely to enrich government-linked property developers and corrupt city officials. The authorities dismiss those accusations.

"This law is a crime!" an elderly man shouted at a public meeting between city officials and hundreds of residents of central Moscow on May 15. Attendees ignored pleas from officials for calm. "Don't you dare tell me to be quiet!" yelled a middle-aged woman, drawing sustained applause.

Both Putin and Sobyenin are up for reelection next year, and the resettlement program, dubbed "a deportation program" by its opponents, could be a problem for both politicians. Putin received only 47 percent of the vote in Moscow, the opposition's traditional stronghold, in the 2012 presidential election, his worst nationwide return. Sobyenin narrowly avoided a second-round runoff against opposition leader Alexei Navalny when he was elected mayor in 2013, as allegations swirled that officials had rigged the vote in his favor.

Up to 30,000 people marched in central Moscow on May 14 against the proposed law, many of them calling for Sobyenin's resignation.



BY  
**MARC BENNETTS**  
@marcbennetts1



Unlike previous protests in Moscow, the crowd included large numbers of older people, as well as families with young children. “I would never have believed I would be going on a protest march, but the demolition program is a disgrace,” says Pavel, a burly young man with tattoos on his arm, who declined to give his surname but claims to work for “the state.”

Opponents of the legislation have so far balked at an official alliance with Russia’s anti-Putin movement, and riot police forcibly removed opposition leader Navalny, his wife, Yulia, and their young son from the May 14 demonstration. But the authorities are concerned, analysts say, that widespread anger over the demolitions project is radicalizing large numbers of previously politically apathetic Russians. “My political activeness has risen from zero to the maximum right now,” says Shagiakhmetova, the businesswoman.

“I’m ashamed that I didn’t go on earlier protests against corruption. But now I see that everything in our country is built on lies, from state TV to the very highest levels of government.”

So far, opposition to the legislation has been driven mainly by women, which is unusual in

**“NOW I SEE THAT EVERYTHING IN OUR COUNTRY IS BUILT ON LIES, FROM STATE TV TO THE VERY HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.”**

**HOME FIRES:** Anti-demolition activist Kari Guggenberger shows the kitchen of her Moscow apartment in a building to be demolished under the city’s renovation plan.

SERGEI KARPUKHIN/REUTERS

Russia’s male-dominated society. “Until this program was announced, I had no interest in politics or social issues,” says Kari Guggenberger, an IT specialist who was one of the organizers of the May 14 protest. “I spent my time on my hobbies, on my own interests. But this threat to my home, the most precious thing I own, has completely altered my view of the world.”

#### **‘THE WHOLE APARTMENT IS OURS!’**

The majority of units slated for demolition date from the 1950s, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev ordered a colossal construction project that would provide millions of Russians with their own apartments for the first time. For Soviet citizens who had grown up in crowded communal homes, with shared bathrooms and kitchens, the project was wonderful. “The whole apartment is ours, ours! The kitchen too is ours, ours! Our windows and our doors! I can’t believe my eyes!” sang the blissful main characters in a 1962 Soviet musical as they marveled at their new home.

Though many of the first wave of apartments—dubbed Khrushchevki by Russians—were built with cheap materials and meant to last only 25 years, others were built more sturdily and designed to last up to 150 years. Indeed, thousands of the apartment blocks that authorities want to demolish were constructed with brick and concrete and remain in good condition.



"The mayor has not provided enough evidence that all or even a significant number of these five-story apartment blocks are in a dilapidated or even hazardous condition," Yury Yekhin, a prominent member of the Union of Architects, told Russian media in May. Paradoxically, some residential buildings that City Hall has officially deemed hazardous have not been included in the list of blocks to be demolished.

The authorities have moved swiftly to mollify residents' concerns. Parliament has postponed the second reading of the law, originally scheduled for late May, until July. Putin, who has publicly backed the legislation, also appears to be concerned by the strength of the grassroots movement against the project. On May 4, he said, "Nothing should be forced upon people, and their rights should be fully respected." Moscow City Hall subsequently vowed that no apartment buildings would be demolished unless a majority of residents were in favor, and it set up an electronic voting system.

Critics, however, say the vote will be easy for authorities to manipulate. Under the rules governing it, a failure to register and vote will be counted as a ballot in favor of the demolition project. On May 15, officials said that 20,000 people had already voted, and not a single person was against the project—an announcement widely mocked by the project's critics. "The authorities are turning people against them," says Vladimir Krasilnikov, a former journalist, during an interview in the north Moscow apartment that is home to three generations of his family.

Krasilnikov, 69, spent 15 years traveling around Russia and the world with Putin as part of the Kremlin press pool. He bought the three-room apartment in 2000 after being granted an interest-free loan by the NTV television channel as compensation for injuries he

received while covering the first Chechen war. "You could say I earned this apartment with my own blood," he says. "I feel personally insulted that the authorities want to take it away from me."

Shagiakhmetova's apartment block was not included in the preliminary list of buildings to be torn down in the first wave of demolitions. But she remains fearful for the future of her home and deeply distrustful of City Hall. "They are keeping us for dessert," she says. "But...I'll be here until the bulldozers arrive." ■

"THIS THREAT TO MY HOME, THE MOST PRECIOUS THING I OWN, HAS COMPLETELY ALTERED MY VIEW OF THE WORLD."



**PARADISE LOST:** Many of the apartment blocks scheduled for demolition date from the 1950s. While some were built cheaply, others were designed to last 150 years and are still in good condition.



**STASH:** Greek authorities seized guns, money, and more than 600,000 Captagon pills in a raid in March. The amphetamine-based pills had an estimated market value of \$10.5 million.



## High Maintenance

EUROPEAN INVESTIGATORS ARE FINDING CACHES OF AN AMPHETAMINE POPULAR WITH JIHADIS

**IN THE PAST** three months, investigators across Europe have intercepted thousands of Captagon pills, an amphetamine-based drug popular with the Islamic State militant group. Nicknamed “the jihadists’ drug,” Captagon keeps users awake for long periods of time, dulls pain and creates a sense of euphoria. According to one former militant who spoke to CNN in 2014, ISIS “gave us drugs, hallucinogenic pills that would make you go to battle not caring if you live or die.” Given similar testimony from other fighters, experts say it seems likely that the hallucinogenic pills the militant took were Captagon.

On May 10, Dutch investigators said they had discovered a drug lab the previous month that was churning out Captagon pills, and they were looking for two suspects associated with the lab. In March, Greek police confiscated more than 600,000 Captagon pills in a raid and arrested four people for allegedly manufacturing the drug.

Greek and Dutch police haven’t said the Captagon they found was destined for ISIS fighters.

Captagon is one of the brand names for the drug fenethylline, a combination of amphetamine and theophylline that relaxes the muscle around the lungs and is used to treat breathing problems. A German company first synthesized fenethylline in 1961, and when it discovered the drug improved alertness, doctors began prescribing it to treat narcolepsy and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Though generally without side effects, says Dr. Raj Persaud, a fellow at the London-based Royal College of Psychiatrists, overuse can cause extreme depression, tiredness, insomnia, heart palpitations and, in rare cases, blindness and heart attacks. In the 1980s, when the drug’s addictiveness became clear, the U.S. and the World Health Organization listed it as a controlled substance, and it is now illegal to buy and sell throughout most of the world.

Nevertheless, fenethylline is popular in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where more Captagon is consumed than in any other country in the

world. Though Islamic law forbids the consumption of alcohol and other drugs, many users there see Captagon as a medicinal substance. In October 2015, Lebanese authorities arrested a Saudi prince at the Beirut airport after two tons of cocaine and Captagon pills, which sell for roughly \$20 per pill in Saudi Arabia, were found on a private plane.

Once manufactured in Eastern Europe, Turkey and Lebanon, according to Columbia University’s *Journal of International Affairs*, Captagon is now predominantly made in Syria. The Syrian conflict has allowed for illicit activities to flourish, and many fighters there know the benefits of using the drug.

The use of drugs in war has a long history. The ancient Greeks, the Vikings, U.S. Civil War soldiers and the Nazis all relied on drugs—wine, mushrooms, morphine and methamphetamines, respectively—to get them through the horror of battle. “The holy grail that armies around the world have been looking for is a drug that gives people courage,” says Persaud, and Captagon comes close. “It doesn’t give you distilled courage, but it gives you a tendency to want to keep going and impaired judgment, so you don’t consider whether you’re scared or not,” he says. “You feel euphoria. You don’t feel pain. You could say it’s courage without the judgment.” For a fighter in a war so brutally waged, the benefits of that are clear. **N**

**'THE**

# WATSON

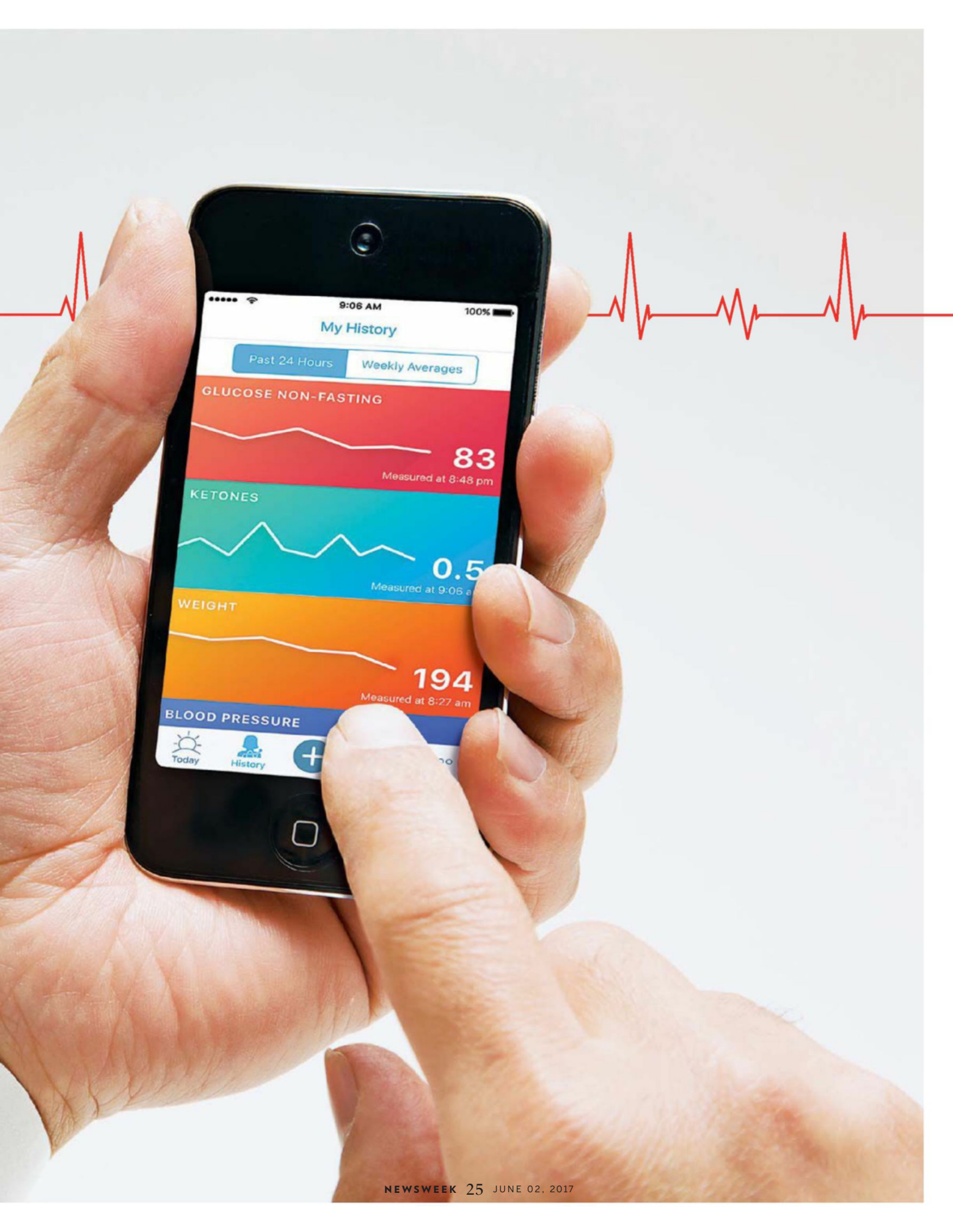
**WILL SEE YOU NOW'**

**Trumpcare** was DOA. Congress isn't going to fix Obamacare. The only prescription for better (and cheaper) health care: 'Take two apps and call me in the morning'

**By Kevin Maney**







# FOR DECADES, TECHNOLOGY HAS RELENTLESSLY MADE PHONES, LAPTOPS, APPS AND ENTIRE INDUSTRIES CHEAPER AND BETTER—WHILE HEALTH CARE HAS STUBBORNLY LOITERED IN AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE WHERE TECH MAKES EVERYTHING MORE EXPENSIVE AND MORE COMPLEX.

Now, startups are applying artificial intelligence (AI), floods of data and automation in ways that promise to dramatically drive *down* the costs of health care while increasing effectiveness. If this profound trend plays out, within five to 10 years, Congress won't have to fight about the exploding costs of Medicaid and insurance. Instead, it might battle over what to do with a massive windfall. Today's debate over the repeal of Obamacare would come to seem as backward as a discussion about the merits of leeching.

Hard to believe? One proof point is in the maelstrom of activity around diabetes, the most expensive disease in the world. In the U.S., nearly 10 percent of the population has diabetes, around 30 million people. Within a decade, some experts say, the number of diabetics in China will outnumber the entire U.S. population. Most people who suffer from the disease spend \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year on medication, and diabetics with complications can spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on doctor and hospital bills. That and the lost wages of diabetics cost the U.S. alone more than \$245 billion a year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That's an enormous problem to solve—and a pile of potential cash and customers to be won—which is why diabetes is attracting entrepreneurs like ants to a dropped ice cream cone. One of those entrepreneurs is Sami Inkinen. He was a co-founder of the real estate site Trulia and has long been an endurance athlete, competing seriously in triathlons and Ironman events. In 2014, he and his wife rowed from California to Hawaii. None of this fits the typical profile of a diabetic, yet in 2011, soon after yet another triathlon, Inkinen was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. And like many driven, super-smart data geeks, he dove into research to understand everything about his condition.

That journey led him to Dr. Stephen Phinney, a medical researcher at the University of California, Davis, and Jeff Volek, a scientist at Ohio State. Phinney and Volek wrote two books together about low-carbohydrate diets and published scientific papers describing how constant adjustments to diet and lifestyle can reverse diabetes in

many patients. Diabetes is almost never treated that way because the program is too hard for most people to stick to. It requires so much coaching and scrutiny by medical professionals, you'd pretty much have to hire a live-in doctor.

Inkinen convinced Phinney and Volek that technology could essentially re-create a live-in doctor and diabetes coach in a smartphone. Together, the three founded Virta Health in 2014. The company stayed in stealth mode until now, launching in March. "It felt like a duty to do this," Inkinen tells *Newsweek*. "Here is an epidemic of epic proportion, and nothing is working. We can combine science and technology to solve the problem at much lower cost and do it safely."

Here's how Virta works and why its approach is so important to the future of health care. On the front end, Virta is software on a smartphone. Diabetics who sign up agree to regularly enter data: glucose levels, weight, blood pressure, activity. Some do this by manually entering information; others use devices like a Fitbit or connected scales to automatically send it in. The app also frequently asks multiple-choice questions about

## DIABETES IS ATTRACTING ENTREPRENEURS LIKE ANTS TO A DROPPED ICE CREAM CONE.

mood, energy levels and hunger—more data that the AI software crunches to learn about the patient, look for warning signs and symptoms and guide Virta's doctors.

On the back end, Virta hires doctors who get streams of updates from Virta's software and use the data to help them make decisions about how to adjust each patient's diet and medications or anything else that might affect that person's health. "Any clinical decision is always made by a doctor," Inkinen says. "But the software increases productivity by 10-X." (That's 10 times, in Silicon Valley-speak.) When all this works and the patient follows the program's strict dietary and medical controls, diabetes



can be reversed, clinical trials of Virta's system have shown. Around 87 percent of patients who had been relying on insulin to control their condition either decreased their dose or eliminated their use of insulin completely—a success rate that matches that for bariatric surgery, which is an expensive, invasive, last-ditch effort for severe diabetics.

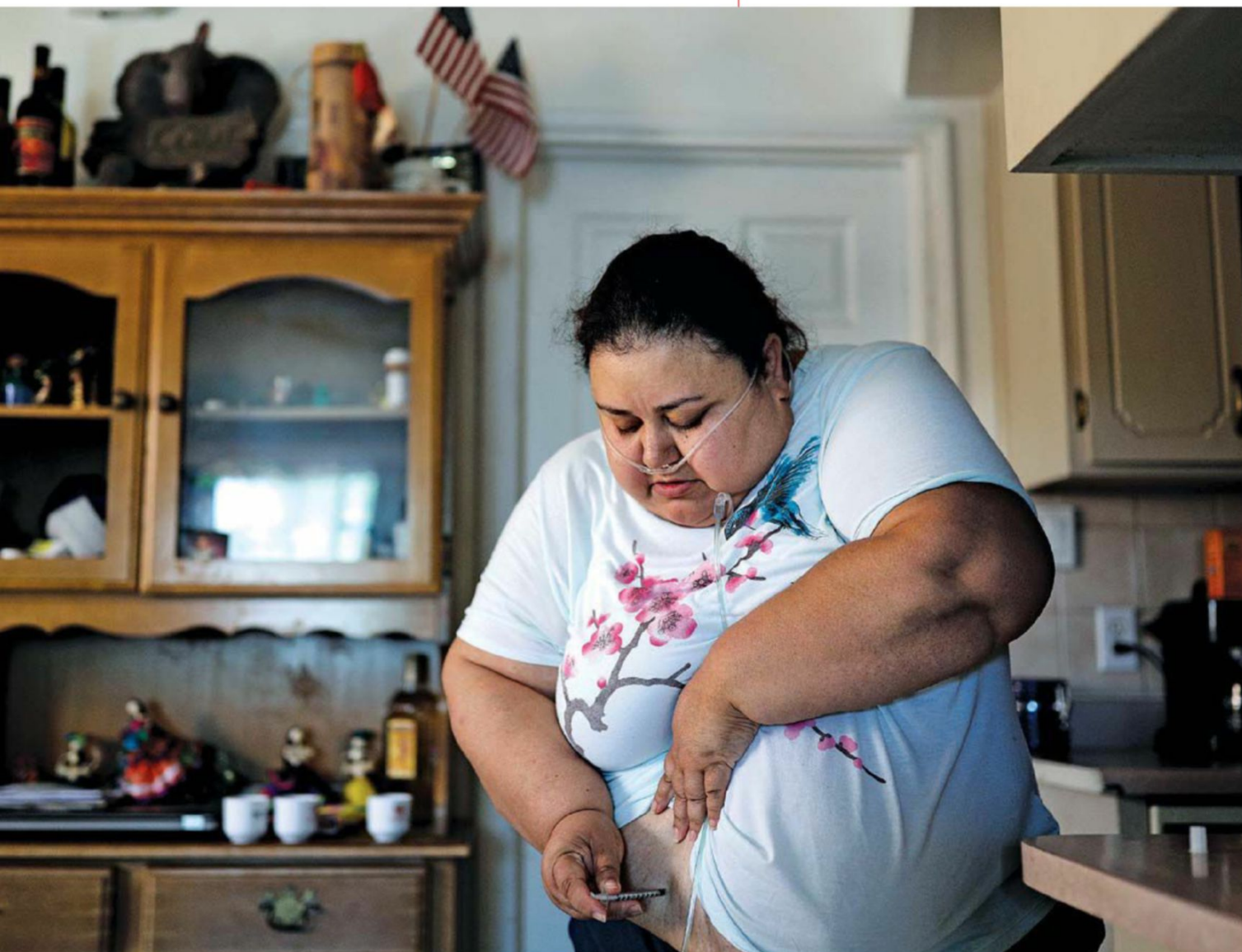
Virta leverages AI software, smartphones and cloud computing to allow its doctors to continually interact with many times more patients than they can in a clinic or hospital, and it gives its diabetic patients a cross between a pocket doctor and a guardian angel. The result is a promising treatment for diabetes that could get many sufferers off medication and keep them out of doctors' offices and hospital emergency

rooms. And that, in turn, would greatly lower the overall cost of diabetes.

Virta is just one startup of many attacking diabetes. Livongo is a more automated but less doctor-oriented version of Virta's program. The company, which raised \$52.5 million in March, makes a wireless glucose-reading device that uploads the diabetic's data. AI software learns about the patient and sends a stream of tips and information intended to help the diabetic manage the disease and stay out of hospitals. Yet another new startup, Fractyl, takes a more medical approach. It invented a type of catheter

**SWEET RELIEF:** Constant adjustments to diet and lifestyle can reverse diabetes in many patients, but it's rarely treated that way because the regimen is too hard for most patients to follow. Yes, there's an app for that.

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## 'ALEXA, WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?'



**OVER THE** past decade, medical records in the U.S.—long kept on paper in doctors' horrible handwriting—have been digitized and fed into software. That hasn't helped lower health care costs yet, and in fact it is adding to them as systems get installed and medical professionals learn to use software that can be clunky. Epic Systems, the biggest electronic medical records company, handles 54 percent of patients' records in the U.S. but gets bad marks for being so hard to use that it eats up doctors' and nurses' time. One report from *Becker's Hospital Review* said that almost 30 percent of Epic clients wouldn't recommend it to their peers. A survey by Black Book Market Research found that 30 percent of hospital personnel were dissatisfied with their EMR systems, with Epic getting the strongest dissatisfaction.

But there's a larger gain from the pain of EMRs: Enormous amounts of medical information are now digitized. As more medical interaction happens online—as with Virta or Livongo—the more kinds of data we'll collect. Internet of Things devices, whether Fitbits or connected glucose meters or potential new devices like Apple AirPods that take biometric readings, will add yet more data. All this data can help AI software learn about diseases in

**CHIP OFF THE OLD DOC:** Livongo allows users to monitor their glucose level; AI software analyzes data and then sends back tips to keep the user healthy and out of the hospital.

that seems to cause changes in the intestines that result in reversing diabetes.

Startup tracker Crunchbase lists about 130 new tech-oriented companies (the number changes constantly) involved in some aspect of diabetes. While many of these startups will fail, it's hard to imagine that some won't have a significant impact.

These efforts matter to all of us because diabetes is such an enormous drain on health care resources. Venture capitalist Hemant Taneja, who helped start Livongo, says technology could take \$100 billion out of the annual cost of diabetes in the U.S. Imagine if even 20 percent of diabetics could get off medication and have little need for a doctor's care. All of those medical resources would get freed up for other patients and other conditions, which should help lower prices of health care for all. "If we want to massively lower health care costs, we need to figure out how to address metabolic health issues [like diabetes] at their core," Inkinen says. "I would bet my house that in 15 years, the future health care company looks like what we're doing today—not treating diseases at the end of the road but catching them along the way and reversing them."

## VIRTA GIVES DIABETICS A CROSS BETWEEN A **POCKET DOCTOR** AND A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

general, and about individual patients, opening up new ways for technology to be applied.

Some of the new applications of AI will simply improve a tragically inefficient health care industry. Qventus is a startup using AI to take all the data flowing through a hospital to learn how to free up doctors and nurses to see more patients and improve outcomes. "We're creating efficiency out of seemingly nothing," Qventus CEO Mudit Garg tells me. "Two years ago, work like this was so unsexy. But this is where the rubber meets the road."

One of his clients, Mercy Hospital Fort Smith in Fort Smith, Arkansas, has been able to treat 3,000 more patients a year with the same resources, an increase of 18 percent. Here again,



technology is increasing the supply of medical services, potentially changing the cost equation that keeps forcing health care prices higher.

AI is also starting to automate some of the work of doctors. IBM's Watson, which uses machine learning and massive computing power to reason its way through questions, is on its way to becoming the best diagnostician on the planet. Its software can soak up all manner of available (and anonymized) patient data, plus the tens of thousands of medical research papers published every year (far more than any human could read). The system can even keep up with the news, learning, for instance, which regions are affected by a certain contagious disease, which might help diagnose someone who recently traveled to one of those areas. By asking patients a series of questions spoken into any kind of computer or connected device, Watson can quickly narrow down the possible causes of a medical problem. Today, IBM works on test projects with major hospitals like the Cleveland Clinic to put Watson in the hands of doctors, who are learning how to

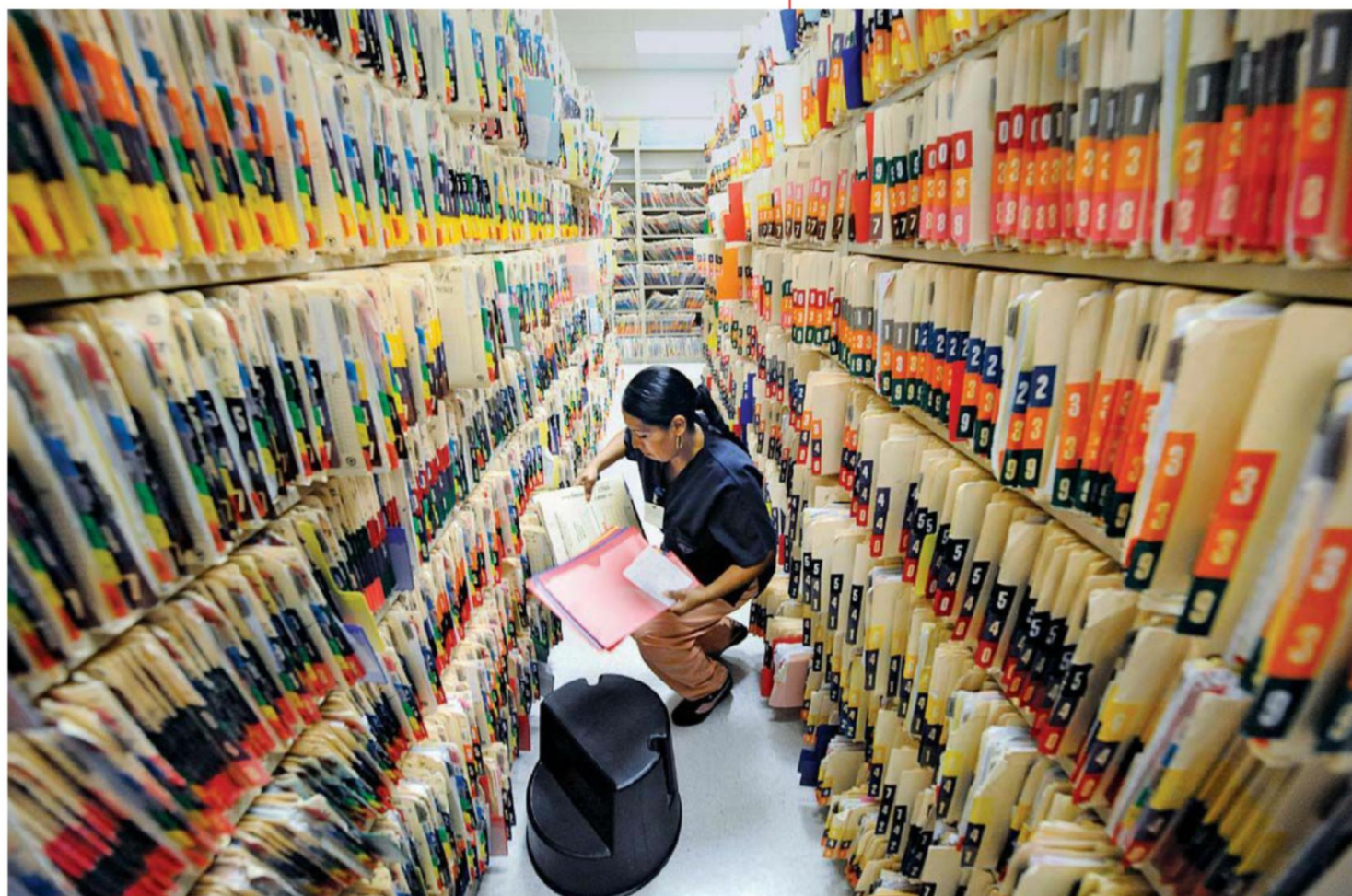
use the technology like a brilliant assistant.

But the day will come when Watson or something like it is available to everyone through a smartphone or some other device. Amazon is starting down that path by partnering with HealthTap to offer what it calls Dr. A.I. on Alexa, Amazon's voice-activated AI gadget for consumers. It's not nearly as robust as Watson but works on the same idea. Just tell it your medical problem, and it will ask you questions to help narrow down what it might be.

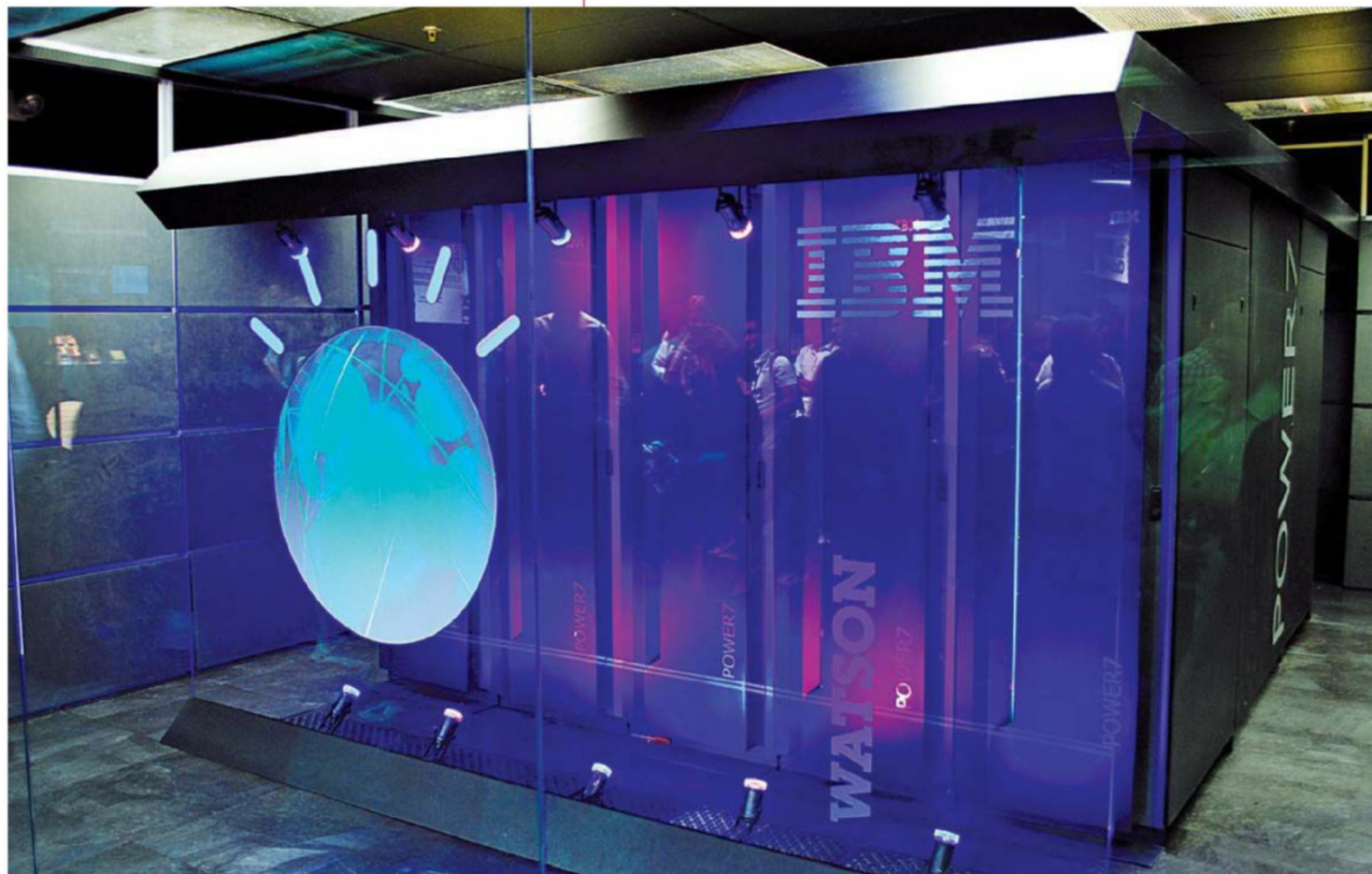
As health care AI develops, startups are also creating new kinds of genomics-based medicine. Just 16 years ago, the Human Genome Project and geneticist Craig Venter's startup, Celera Genomics, published the results of their human genome sequencing within a day of each other in 2001. Venter said his project took 20,000 hours of processor time on a supercomputer. This

**PAPER CUTS: AI will allow doctors to more efficiently learn from the massive archive of medical records that is mostly an untapped resource today. As wearable devices proliferate, so too will the amount of data about patients.**

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year, startup Color Genomics is offering a \$249 genetic test that can sequence most of the pertinent genes in the human body. Color's goal is to make genetic sequencing so cheap and easy that every baby born will have it done, and the data will inform his or her health care for life.

Combine genetic data about a person with all the kinds of data Watson can ingest, and we're close to being able to build AI software that can at least supplant that first visit to a doctor when you're sick—which, of course, is when you least want to travel to a doctor's office. Instead, people will increasingly speak to a smartphone or to something like Dr. A.I. on Alexa about their health problems and, if necessary, send in photos of that rash or funky toe. If the system has your health care records and genetic data, it can gain more insight into your condition than any doctor operating on an informed hunch.

On many occasions, the app might tell the user the problem is nothing serious—a robot equivalent of “Take two aspirin and call me in the morning.” Other times, the app might send the user to a clinic to get a test or X-ray. If that's how it plays out, a large chunk of the traffic into doctors' offices and hospitals will fade away.

Add it up, and in these next few years we're

**+ STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE AND SAY “AI”: IBM's Watson is quickly becoming a superb diagnostician because it can soak up all manner of patient data and the tens of thousands of medical research papers published each year.**

going to see a parade of tech applications that reduce demand on the health care system while giving all of us more access to care. Doctors should be freed up to do a better job for patients who truly need their attention. Theoretically, all of this will help keep more people healthier. And if we're all healthier and using health care less, the laws of supply and demand should kick in, sending the overall cost of health care tumbling.

However, there are bumps ahead because, as our erudite president recently said, “nobody knew that health care could be so complicated.”

## THE AUTOMATION RX



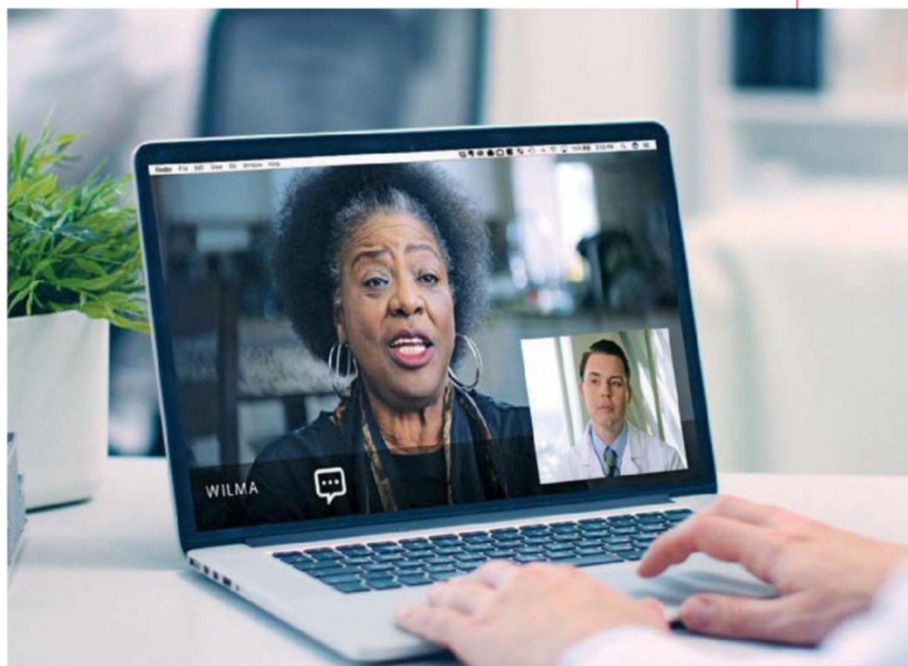
**THE ECONOMICS** of health care are weird. First of all, the usual forces don't apply to highly regulated industries, and health care is perhaps the most regulated in the U.S. and around the world because lives are at stake. In most countries, regulators prevent AI software from crossing



the line into independently offering a diagnosis or clinical advice—that's strictly the purview of doctors. New medical devices, like Fractyl's, have to get approval from the Food and Drug Administration. Lobbyists often slow regulatory change to maintain the status quo and benefit incumbents charging inflated prices.

Personal health care decisions in the U.S. often get influenced by insurance companies,

**"I WOULD BET MY HOUSE THAT  
IN 15 YEARS, THE HEALTH CARE  
COMPANY LOOKS LIKE WHAT  
WE'RE DOING TODAY."**



**SCREEN TEST: Software, mobile devices and AI can help doctors do their work faster and more efficiently, as well as increase the amount and quality of care delivered to their patients.**

employers who pay for health benefits, and Medicare. Unlike most industries, consumers in health care don't have much information about pricing or quality, so they can't weigh options and make rational choices. Moreover, we think about health differently from anything else we buy. Many of us are never satiated with health care—we always want more and better health care, if we can afford it. One study published in March showed that telehealth—making doc-

tors available by video call—prompted people to seek care for minor illnesses they otherwise would've ignored. Only 12 percent of telehealth "visits" replaced in-person visits, and the other 88 percent was new demand.

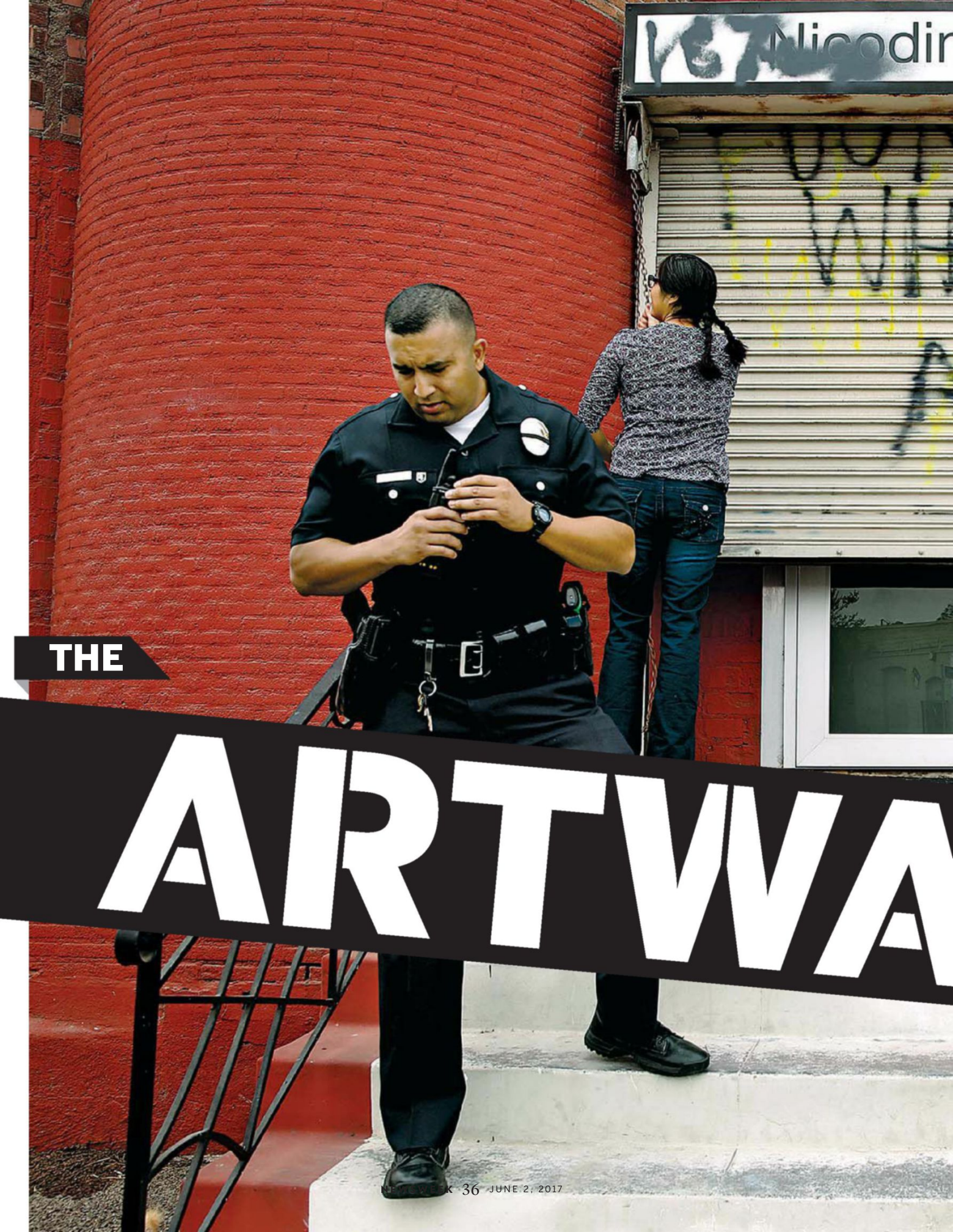
Until recently, most new medical technology has been high-end products that give doctors and hospitals a reason to charge more for something that couldn't have been done in the past. Think MRI machines or robotic limbs. These improve quality of life but add to costs. In 2008, the Congressional Budget Office concluded, "The most important factor driving the long-term growth of health care costs has been the emergence, adoption, and widespread diffusion of new medical technologies and services."

The next wave of health care technology is different. The combination of data and AI was not available until the past year or two, and it can lead to the kind of automation that has disrupted so many other industries. Many health care entrepreneurs are focused precisely on the win-win-win prospect of lowering the cost of care while making it better and available to more people. Of course, there will be challenges to address, such as making sure our highly sensitive medical data stays protected and private, even as it flies around various networks and systems.

As startups bring these technologies online, they're often doing an end run around insurance companies, instead finding demand among consumers or employers who offer health coverage. Livongo, for instance, points out to companies that each diabetic employee costs thousands of dollars a year in care. Pay for the Livongo service, the pitch goes, and your company will save money as those employees better manage their conditions. By last year, Livongo had signed up more than 50 large customers, including Quicken, Office Depot, Office Max and S.C. Johnson & Son. As the thinking goes among health care startups, once employers and consumers embrace new technology, insurance companies, regulators and health care incumbents will have to follow.

As that happens, the technologists promise, economic forces will finally stall or reverse the climbing cost of health care in the U.S. and around the world, a development that would, if we're lucky, leave the president and just about every member of Congress speechless. ■





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# ARTVWA



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**GENTRIFICATION IS REMAKING  
THE CITIES OF THE WORLD,  
FROM LONDON TO JAKARTA,  
BUT ACTIVISTS IN EAST LOS  
ANGELES HAVE DECIDED  
TO FIGHT BACK. THEIR GOAL:  
KILL THE ART GALLERIES**

*By Alexander Nazaryan*

**ASHING**

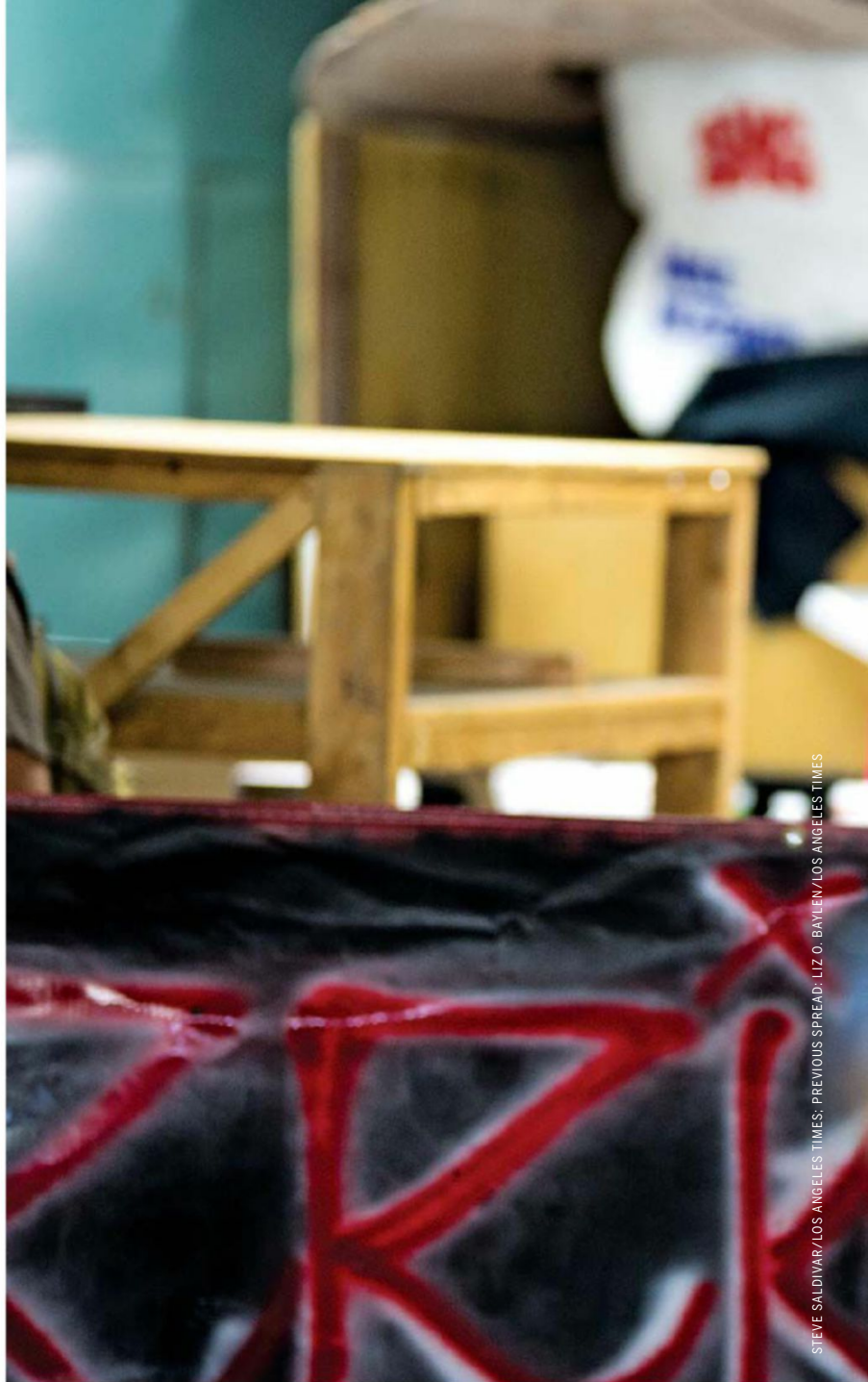
**OF AMERICA**



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**THEY KNOW** the end is near, which is why the young men and women of Boyle Heights have taken to the streets with such fury, clad in bandannas, hoisting placards that leave little room for compromise. They've been charged with promoting violence and anti-white racism, and they don't care. They're in a desperate fight to keep this rise of land on the East Side of Los Angeles from becoming the next Silver Lake or the next Echo Park, formerly Latino neighborhoods overtaken by glass condominiums full of white people who have come from Beverly Hills, or maybe the hills of Arkansas.

Many of the young men and women nurse bitter memories of Chavez Ravine, a Mexican-American enclave forcibly cleared to make way for Dodger Stadium. Almost nothing remains of it 50 years later, and maybe nothing will remain of Boyle Heights either in a few years, except perhaps a plaque in Mariachi Plaza timidly describing what this neighborhood once was, before the beloved El Tepeyac restaurant became a vegan smokehouse, or just an empty storefront.



STEVE SALDIVAR/LOS ANGELES TIMES; PREVIOUS SPREAD: LIZ O. BAYLEN/LOS ANGELES TIMES

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**MI CASA NOT SU CASA:** Small gallery owners priced out of West L.A. by exorbitant rents have started colonizing abandoned warehouses in the city's east side, which includes many Hispanic communities.

And what of the people who now live there? Of the neighborhood's 92,000 residents, 94 percent are Latino, 33 percent live in poverty, 76 percent rent, 95 percent do not have a four-year college degree, 17 percent are undocumented immigrants. Where will they go? Angel Luna, a 24-year-old activist with Defend Boyle Heights, knows: "Fucking Victorville," the poor, arid plains east of Los Angeles.

There is no "Victorville" outside of London, but the residents in that city's formerly working-class neighborhoods like Shoreditch and Brixton are victim to the same forces moving with blitzkrieg speed toward East Los Angeles.





**“WE DON’T WANT NO YUPPIE FLATS.  
WE ARE HAPPY WITH OUR RATS.”**

They are not dissimilar from the forces of nationalism now resurgent across the West, pitting a global, techno-fluent elite against less-skilled underclasses intimidated by cosmopolitan culture, with all its shows of wealth and sophistication. Gentrifying neighborhoods—whether deep in Brooklyn, New York, or on a hillside of Rio de Janeiro—are where those forces clash. Such clashes have become so frequent that *The Guardian* has an entire online section titled “Gentrified World,” chronicling conflicts in Montreal, Moscow and Jakarta,

even post-industrial Birmingham, once England’s motor city.

Stopping “the economic forces of gentrification” is Luna’s plan, he informed me over lunch at a Mexican restaurant off Mariachi Plaza. He spoke like a revolutionary but looked like a kid, one who hasn’t had it easy, growing up in a rented apartment with his mother and three siblings. Luna now works in retail. He still lives with his family, and they still rent.

A tattoo of an Aztec deity peeks out





**+**  
**STREET WARFARE:** A string of warehouses along Anderson Street, on the western edge of Boyle Heights, have recently been converted into art galleries.

from beneath the right sleeve of his T-shirt. Enormous glasses give his face the look of an earnest student reading Marx for the first time in a Paris café as the spring of '68 comes into bloom. The Ho Chi Minh goatee also suggests a conflict from that era. But the too-large jeans, scrunched together at the waist

## **LIKE THE BATTLE OF STALINGRAD, THIS IS A FURIOUSLY CONTESTED, BLOCK-BY-BLOCK AFFAIR.**

by a belt, seem less a function of fashion than necessity.

Little of what Luna told me over lunch—about gentrification, displacement, appropriation, capitalism—was original. Some of it seemed unreasonable, though it must also be said that he was not making these arguments on my behalf. The young men and women taking to the streets in East Los Ange-





LUIS SINCO/LOS ANGELES TIMES

les or East London frequently do not have the luxury of expensive university educations. Instead, their understanding of the issue is visceral, borne of experience. In Berlin, for example, anti-gentrification protesters hoisted a banner that said, “We don’t want no yuppie flats. We are happy with our rats,” words borrowed from the Dutch punk band Mushroom Attack. A poster in Bushwick, Brooklyn, called gentrification “the new colonialism.”

The surprising thing about Boyle Heights is that the neighborhood’s supposed destroyers are not the builders and sellers of “yuppie flats,” developers bearing plans for glass towers, real estate agents stoking hype about *this, right here*, being the next, next thing. For the most part, those moneyed interests have watched this battle from the safe remove of the West Side, as activists target an unlikely foe: artists.

Defend Boyle Heights has targeted 10 new art galleries on South Anderson Street, a formerly industrial strip along the desolate banks of the Los Angeles River. Activists say the galleries are a proxy for corporate interests, especially those of high-end real estate. After the galleries will come the coffee shops and bars, and after that, the restaurants that serve bacon in cocktails. After that, unkempt lots empty for decades will be boxed in construction plywood, and then there will be many hollow promises of affordable housing. And then it really will be time for “fucking Victorville.”

The above process is known as *artwashing*, which has come to widely describe displacement efforts in which the artistic community is tacitly complicit. The term appears to have first been used in mainstream

media in 2014 by Feargus O’Sullivan of *The Atlantic*, in an article about a tower in once-destitute East London that had been redeveloped for high-paying tenants. They were being enticed, in part, by suggestions that they wouldn’t be gentrifiers but, rather, original members of a new artistic community. “The artist community’s short-term occupancy is being used for a classic profit-driven regeneration maneuver,” O’Sullivan said. He labeled the process “artwashing.”

Yet for many the notion of artwashing is no less urban myth than alligators in the sewers of New York. Several studies have concluded that art galleries do not displace low-income residents, but Defend Boyle Heights and the Boyle Heights Alliance Against Artwashing and Displacement

(BHAAAD, pronounced “bad”) don’t care about academic urbanists’ peer-reviewed studies. They know the galleries are a cancer that must be eradicated, for they are “enemies of the people,” as Luna called them. “I want these galleries to get the fuck out of Boyle Heights,” he said, finally managing a bite of food.

The course of chemotherapy recommended by Defend Boyle Heights is relentlessly aggressive. Someone shot a potato gun at the attendees of an art show, and someone spray-painted “Fuck white art” on the walls of several galleries. Like the Battle of Stalingrad, this is a furiously contested, block-by-block affair. Both sides have suffered painful losses: the closure of Carnitas Michoacan #3, a 33-year-old eatery beloved for its nachos, the shuttering of PSSST, one of the Anderson Street galleries.

When PSSST announced it was leaving in February, the activists rejoiced. “We will not stop fighting until all galleries leave,” proclaimed a statement issued by Defend Boyle Heights and BHAAAD. “Boyle Heights will continue to fight against the false promises of development and community improvement that are supposed to benefit us, but end up displacing us from our home.”

As we finished lunch, I asked Luna if he supported the kind of vandalism and harassment that PSSST’s owner said pushed them out.

“We are not in the position to shun righteous community outrage,” Luna said.

I asked if Defend Boyle Heights supported violence against gallery owners.

Such a denunciation would have been easy to make and probably smart public relations, but Luna refused to do it, referencing once again a community response that was beyond his control. He wants the artists afraid. Even more, he wants them to leave.

## TACOS AND PASTRAMI

Until recently, Boyle Heights was the opposite of hip. Known as “the Ellis Island of the West Coast,” it promised refuge to newcomers to Los Angeles who were prevented by housing covenants from living elsewhere. You can still see the remnants of the Jewish settlement in the Breed Street Shul, which opened in



Somehow, Boyle Heights held together. Last year, Hollenbeck Station recorded only 14 murders. A line of the Metro light rail system now connects it to downtown and the San Gabriel Valley. In 2005, Los Angeles elected a Boyle Heights native as its first Latino mayor, and today, there are new restaurants, coffee shops and galleries, many of them run by locals who want to keep the neighborhood's Chicano heritage alive. That imperative has been called *gentefication* (*gentrification* tempered by *gente*, the Spanish word for "people"), which suggests an organic improvement of a neighborhood by its Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs. For example, at the Primera Taza coffee shop, a café Americano is known as a café Chicano.

It was inevitable that art galleries would ford the Los Angeles River into Boyle Heights. The Arts District, a formerly decrepit section of downtown, has been growing more expensive;

Annenberg Media found that rents rose 140 percent in parts of the neighborhood in the first 14 years of the new millennium. Between 2000 and 2012, rents in all of Los Angeles also rose, but at the much slower rate of 25 percent.

In the three years since that study, new developments like the gigantic One Santa Fe residential-commercial complex have only made the neighborhood more attractive—and more expensive. Michael Maltzan, who designed the sinuous white slabs of One Santa Fe, is also working on the

**BOILING POINT:** The cultural heart of Boyle Heights is Mariachi Plaza, which has been the home of thousands of Mexican and Central American migrants since World War II.

1923. The nursing home on South Fickett Street was once the Japanese hospital. There is a Serbian cemetery, long populated by a brood of "mystery chickens" that inexplicably appeared some years ago on the graveyard's grounds and have themselves become beloved locals. The sign for Jim's restaurant is a classic of mid-century design that promises both tacos and pastrami.

Mexican-Americans started coming to Boyle Heights after World War II, as American cities headed into a decline hastened by the rise of the suburb. Freeways cut up the neighborhood, which in 1961 became home to the inhuman concrete tangle known as the East L.A. Interchange. Boyle Heights also proved a crucible of gang violence, which was practically invented in Los Angeles; in 1992, there were 97 homicides attributed to the Hollenbeck Division, the local station of the Los Angeles Police Department. "Gang members were part of the scenery, like the shrubs finely coated by the freeway emissions from the nearby East L.A. interchange," Hector Becerra wrote in a recent recollection of growing up in Boyle Heights during the 1980s for the *Los Angeles Times*.

## IN 2014, A LATINO GANG CALLED THE BIG HAZARDS FIREBOMBED AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES.

Sixth Street Viaduct, a \$480 million span across the Los Angeles River that will also include much-needed parkland. That bridge will connect downtown directly to Boyle Heights. And though it isn't slated to open until 2020, plenty of Arts District refugees have already crossed the river.

On the refrigerator case at the Primera Taza, for example, is an anti-gentrification sticker. In that case sit bottles of artisanal kombucha.

### 'BURN YOUR SHIT DOWN'

It is a sad irony that Boyle Heights, long a refuge for the unwanted, has become an insular neighborhood suspicious of outsiders. In 2014, a Latino gang called the Big Hazards firebombed African-American families in a housing project on the northern edge of the neighborhood. No one was injured, but the point was made. "Some black families immediately put in for emergency transfers to other housing projects," reported the *Los Angeles Times*.

About two weeks after the firebombing, a West Side brokerage called Adaptive Realty put up posters in the Arts District advertising a bike tour of Boyle Heights. "Why rent downtown when you could own in Boyle Heights?" the posters wondered, showing a fashionable woman astride a fashionable bike and promising "artisanal treats and refreshments."



The *gentri-flyer*, as it came to be known, drew a furious reaction. Someone called the agent who'd organized the event and threatened to "burn your shit down like the Watts Riots in '92." No artisanal treats were consumed.

In the fall of 2015, musical director Yuval Sharon premiered *Hopscotch*, a logistically complex opera that whisked audience members through Los Angeles in limousines. One of the stopping points was Hollenbeck Park, a large green space in the middle of Boyle Heights where weddings and quinceañeras are frequently held.

Residents took offense. A group called Serve the People Los Angeles brought protesters and the local high school's marching band to a *Hopscotch* performance, which they drowned out.

"*Hopscotch Los Angeles* and their art, their performers, their supporters, their capital, are not welcomed in Boyle Heights," Serve the People Los Angeles wrote after that day's confrontation in a blog post studded with quotations from Mao Zedong. That was the last time *Hopscotch* came to Boyle Heights.

The first white-owned gallery to arrive in Boyle Heights was 356 Mission, settling in 2012 on a block proprietor Ethan Swan told me was a dumping ground for mattresses and other unwieldy junk. He rented space in a warehouse that was otherwise unused. At first, he recalled, there were no problems. That started to change with the arrival of Maccarone Gallery three years later. "It still has a dangerous quality—I kind of like that," the gallery's proprietor told *The New York Times* in the fall of 2015. "I like that we spent a fortune on security." In response to that article, locals orga-

nized their first anti-gallery protest.

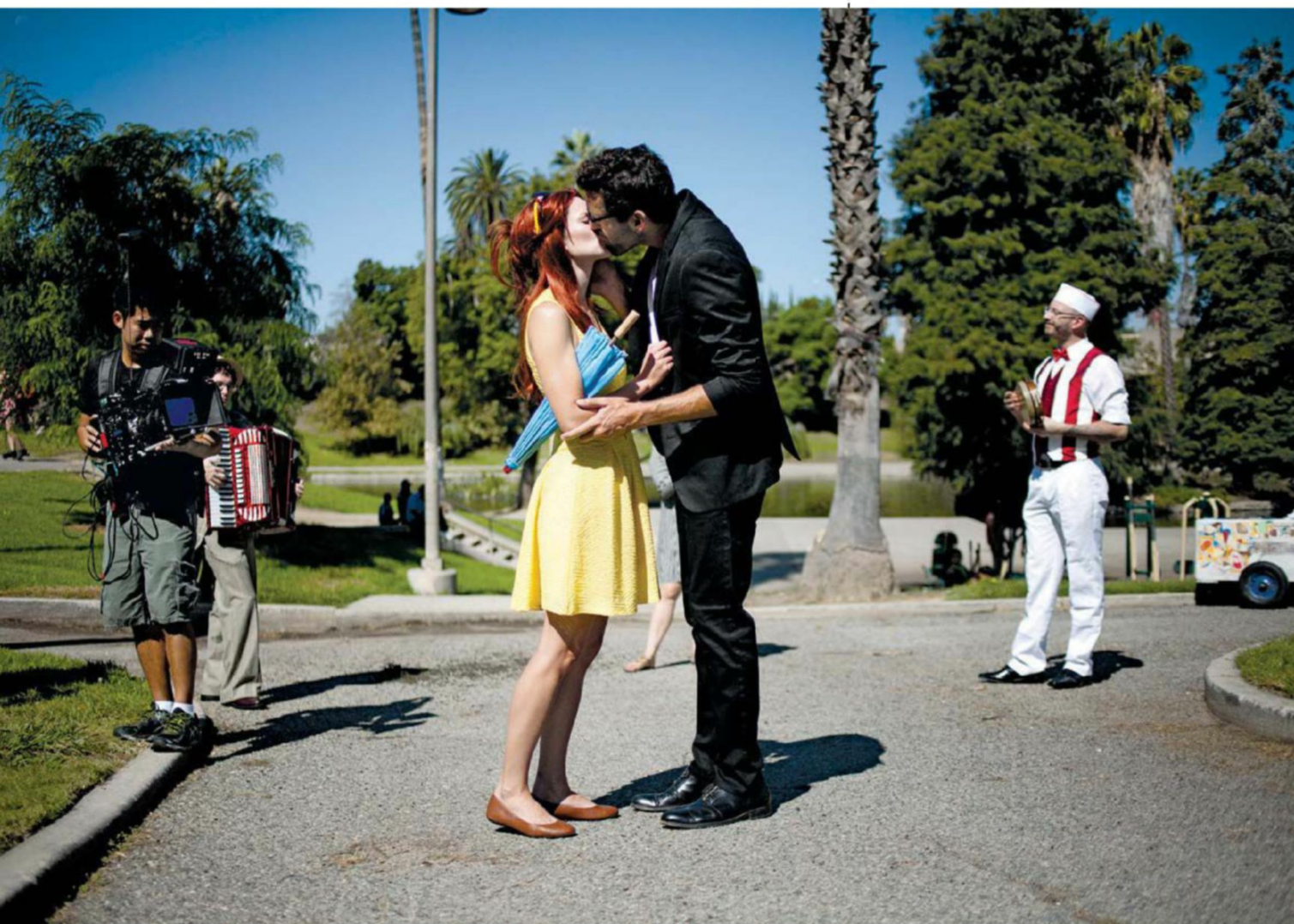
A homemade flag offered a simple equation that may be impossible to resolve: "Gentrification = Racism."

## 'IT WAS VERY SCARY'

Maccarone is not the only gallery that treated Boyle Heights like a dystopian landscape with no culture of its own, no pride of place. For example, in September 2016, United Talent Agency—the influential agency based in Beverly Hills—opened Artist Space. It inaugurated the venue with works by *Kids* director Larry Clark, paintings and photographs that seemed to glamorize drug use. That night, 20 or so protesters showed up in front of the space carrying a banner that declared, "Keep Beverly

**ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY TUBA:** Locals drove out *Hopscotch*, an opera in which people were ferried around the city, by drowning out performers with a high school marching band.

+





Hills out of Boyle Heights.”

Eva Chimento is not originally from Beverly Hills. She is from Brooklyn, where her family operated a trucking company, navigating the complex intersection of organized labor and organized crime. Two and a half years ago, Chimento, who has lived in Los Angeles her entire adult life, divorced the lawyer to whom she had been married for 19 years. She was suddenly the single mother of a teenage daughter,

**WHEREFORE ART?: Activist have targeted art galleries as the first wave of gentrification, and are trying to drive them out of Boyle Heights.**

+

and she had never worked anywhere but art galleries since she was herself a teenager. She decided she wanted to open her own art space, but the properties she saw in the Arts District were far too expensive—more expensive, she says, than even Beverly Hills.

One day, Chimento was driving across the Los Angeles River when she saw an elderly Latino ice cream vendor, a *paletero*, pushing his cart across the bridge. It was, she remembers, about 110 degrees outside, but she got out and helped him push his cart across the river, to its eastern embankment.

That was when she first saw Anderson Street. “It was dirty. It was gross. There were hookers and drug dealers on the street,” she remembered when I visited her at Chimento Contemporary, a small exhibition space at the back a warehouse. One of the artists on display was Monique Prieto, a Chicano artist whose “Hat Dance” series, shown by Chimento, used abstract shapes to allude to a classical Mexican ritual.

“It was very scary. It was completely desolate,” Chimento continued. Other than the galleries that have taken hold here, South Anderson Street



FROM LEFT: MEL WELCON/LOS ANGELES TIMES; STEVE SALVIDAR/LOS ANGELES TIMES





**“IT WAS DIRTY. IT WAS GROSS. THERE WERE HOOKERS AND DRUG DEALERS ON THE STREET. IT WAS VERY SCARY.”**

**RESIST:** Maga Miranda, center, a member of Defend Boyle Heights, says people displaced in earlier waves of gentrification regret not fighting back.

remains fairly desolate. There are warehouses nearby, and 18-wheelers wheeze through the neighborhood, raising dust and intimidating the rare pedestrian. The one non-art, non-industrial business I encountered on South Anderson Street was a brewery, relatively new to the neighborhood and very glad to have not incited the activists' righteous ire.

As a teenager, Chimento had gone into the Pico Gardens housing project to give art lessons, so she was familiar with Boyle Heights, who lived there and how. Anderson Street did not seem to her like Boyle Heights, but, rather, a no-man's land with plenty of unused commercial space. She opened her gallery there in 2015, when her funds consisted of \$1,500. She says local high schoolers used to visit the gallery. Now, some of them want her to leave.

She is outraged by the accusation that she is a gentrifier. “They’re targeting the wrong people,” she says. “They’re targeting business owners. They really need to be targeting the owners of the buildings.” She wonders why the

galleries are deemed enemies, while the Starbucks on East Olympic Boulevard is, presumably, a friend of the people.

Increasingly, Chimento feels unsafe, and her daughter no longer comes around. Much like the activists who want her out of Boyle Heights, Chimento feels that economic forces have assailed her, pushed her into a corner. And much like them, she is determined to stay.

## **‘THE OPENING WEDGE OF TOTALITARIANISM’**

To understand the suspicion fueling the anti-gallery movement, you have to leave Boyle Heights and walk—or, more likely, drive—north, toward a row of palm trees standing like emaciated sentries on a ridge of Elysian Park. Nestled

in these hills is Dodger Stadium, one of America's last great ballparks.

Angelenos frequently resort to a metonymic description of Dodger Stadium by calling it Chavez Ravine. That linguistic shorthand refers to the thriving Chicano neighborhood that once lined the hills. Some of the hills were flattened to make way for the stadium; those that remain are so thoroughly bisected by freeways that they have the feel of uninhabited atolls in the South Pacific. A pedestrian here is bound to have the bewildering experience, common in Los Angeles, of feeling that a sidewalk has suddenly turned into an on-ramp.

Little of the human settlement remains. As the historian Jerald Podair writes in his excellent new book, *City of Dreams: Dodger Stadium and the Birth of Modern Los Angeles*, "Chavez Ravine was home to a tightly knit, working-class Mexican American population" of several hundred families "living in relative isolation from the rest of Los Angeles." There was a rural feel, and some residents "kept chickens and other farm animals."

In 1949, the City Council decided to build public housing in Chavez Ravine, but a group called the Citizens Against Socialist Housing beat that back by depicting it, in Podair's words, as "the opening wedge of totalitarianism." Eight years later, civic leaders enticed Brooklyn Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley—who'd been frustrated in his plans to build a new stadium in Brooklyn to replace Ebbets Field—to bring his ball club to Southern California.

The residents of Chavez Ravine felt they were being forced to sell their land and abandon their homes at preposterously low prices. "It's just as if somebody wants to buy the shoes that you are wearing and you don't want to sell them," one resident wrote to a local newspaper. "What right have they to give our land away?"

It was never in question who was going to win what came to be known as the Battle of Chavez Ravine, but the Chicano residents didn't leave meekly. One of the most ferocious holdouts was the Arechiga family, who had come to Chavez Ravine in 1923. The photograph of one member of the Arechiga family

being dragged down a flight of stairs by police officers is one of the lasting images of that fight.

The passion of the Defend Boyle Heights activists appears principled to some, embarrassingly naïve to others. Rose Garcia, a real estate agent in Highland Park, believes gentrification is good for Los Angeles's East Side. Certainly, it has been good for her, and for the Latinos whose houses she has sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Garcia's family, which is Puerto Rican, came to Highland Park in 1972, when it was still mostly white. As more brown people came, white people fled. Then it got dangerous, with gangs taking over. "I don't see any reason it should lessen up," a Los Angeles Police Department official confessed to the *Los Angeles Times* about the violence on the second day of 1992. "The gangs are just too active. If anything, there may be an increase."

But it did lessen up, if not right away. Whites priced out of the West Side of Los Angeles came to the city's Northeast, first to Silver Lake and Echo Park, then to Highland Park. Garcia started sell-

**"IT'S AS IF SOMEBODY  
WANTS TO BUY THE  
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LAND AWAY?"**

ing real estate 17 years ago; in 2013, she opened her own agency to handle what she calls the "big East Coast migration" to Highland Park.

Some accuse her of abetting gentrification. Garcia is OK with that. "Who is selling this property to you?" she wondered with derision. "It is a Hispanic person who moved here in the 1970s. That's the person that's capitalizing on this big push." If anyone is "getting fucked," she argued, it is the whites thrilled to pay \$800,000 for a beat-up, two-bedroom bungalow.

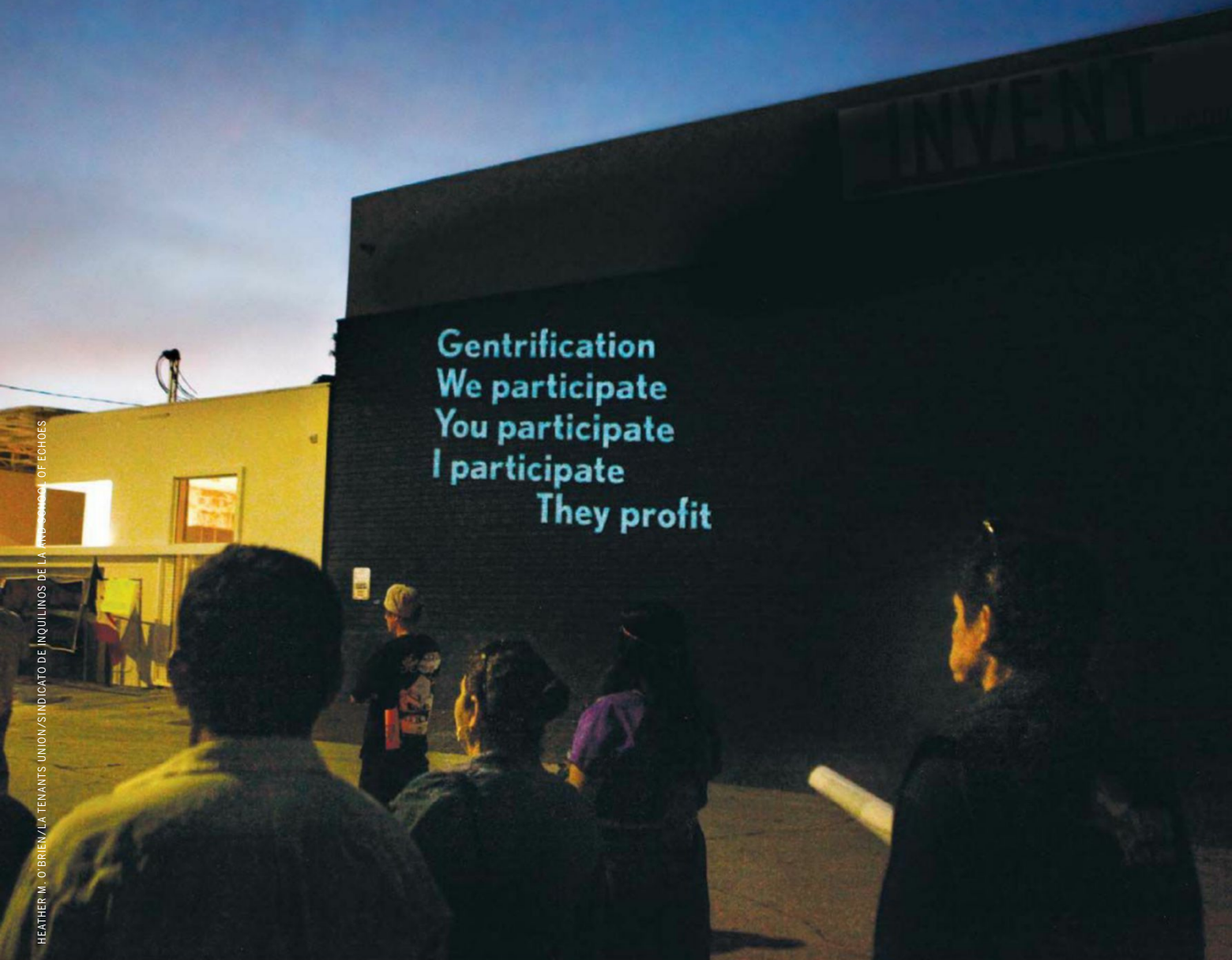
## YOUNG PRINCELINGS AND OLD WAYS

The story of Boyle Heights is not just a Los Angeles story. It is the story of the South Bronx, New York, where artists have taken a foothold in the lofts of Alexander Avenue, in the shadow of public-housing towers. And it is the story of the Mission District in San Francisco, where young princelings of the tech economy have been steadily displacing the city's Latino immigrants. There are similar struggles in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Miami, over what these cities once were, what they have become, what they will be.

The galleries moving to South Anderson Street are part of a globalized







**A PROFIT WITHOUT HONOR:** Some real estate brokers in L.A. argue that the opponents of gentrification ignore the fundamental fact that people who have lived in the city's Hispanic neighborhoods for decades are now able to sell their homes for a huge profit.

and sophisticated city of the 21st century, in which a tourist from Hong Kong or Paris might think nothing of trekking to Chimento Contemporary and paying \$20,000 for one of its artistic offerings. Only the light coating of concrete dust on that tourist's shoes will suggest that this was once something else, that ferocious battles were fought over this land, with *history*, *justice* and *community* deployed as weapons.

But not everyone thinks that battle is lost. There are some who believe that a global city is a city without soul, because a luxury condominium in Lisbon, Portugal, is a luxury condominium in Seattle, which is a luxury condominium in Lagos, Nigeria. For a city to have character and soul, it

must have all the complex constituents of such a project, and that includes locals who work hard in unglamorous jobs, who at the end of the day pop open a can of domestic beer and drink it on their stoop, arguing about *béisbol* and listening to the yapping of small dogs.

That is clealry what the activists in Boyle Heights believe, in any case. They understand that they are trying to hold back time itself. They don't care. This is their Los Angeles. This is their Boyle Heights. **N**

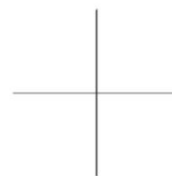








NEW WORLD



DISEASES

SOCIAL

HEARING

FISH

HACKERS

BEVERAGES

GOOD SCIENCE

## LAUDATORY AUDITORY

# Deaf mice can be cured with a gene implant


**HEAR AND NOW:** Repairing the gene that controls the growth of hairs in the inner ear restored hearing in the afflicted mice.

**MORE THAN 5 PERCENT** of the world's population suffers from profound hearing loss, and about 60 percent of the deafness in infants is caused by gene mutations. That's why scientists at the Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School spent several years refining a technique to repair one of the common genetic disorders that cause deafness, Usher Syndrome. The disorder stems from an abnormality in a gene called *ush1c*, which encodes the proteins in the inner-ear hair cells. These hairs convert sound vibration into electrical signals for the brain. In people with Usher Syndrome, that conversion does not happen, leaving them with devastating deafness, loss of balance and sometimes even blindness.

The researchers replaced DNA from a virus with a healthy *ush1c* gene from a mouse. That altered virus was multiplied in a petri dish, then injected into the inner ears of deaf mice suffering from Usher Syndrome. After six weeks, the mice had almost perfect hearing and full recovery of sensory hair growth, brain auditory function, balance and sound sensitivity down to a

whisper. (High pitch frequency sensitivity was only partially restored.)

Dr. Margaret Kenna, a specialist in genetic hearing loss at Boston Children's Hospital who wasn't involved in this study, says that while there are devices that can bolster hearing, nothing beats nature. "Cochlear implants are great, but your own hearing is better in terms of range of frequencies, nuance for hearing voices, music and background noise, and figuring out which direction a sound is coming from." Exactly the kind of results achieved with the deaf mice.

After this study, which appeared in *Nature Biotechnology* last February, the Boston team started preparing for human trials. In March, they exposed human outer-ear hair cells in the lab to the *ush1c*-carrying virus. After 10 days, the virus penetrated about 83 percent of the targeted cells. Although cell function was not tested, the ability to reach so many cells offers real hope that this technique might be able to cure a human *ush1c* gene defect and other disorders caused by genetic mutations. 

DJGUNNER/E+/GETTY

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NEW WORLD/HACKERS

DISRUPTIVE

## THE QUIET BOMB

# North Korean hackers are much scarier than North Korean nukes

**AN EPIC** catastrophe threatens to rain death and destruction across the world, but it's not the danger most of us fear—not the missile that an over-inflated autocratic North Korean might launch. If you want to get really terrified, think of this month's global ransomware hack as a war-mup for the kind of complete digital shutdown that might—and some say will—come.

This moment has echoes from 100 years ago. In 1918, the first mechanized world war seemed like the worst thing that had ever happened to humanity. It killed 17 million people in war zones. Starting just as World War I was ending, a Spanish flu pandemic raced around the planet, killing as many as 100 million people in every big city and small town. Nobody anywhere was safe from it, and nobody anticipated it.

A nuclear battle involving North Korea would be horrific—a modern equivalent of World War I. Yet a major cyberattack that completely disrupts everything digital would spin the world into a chaos that could spell the end of our society. We can't imagine the toll because we've never seen such an attack. Former CIA Director Michael Hayden has compared it to our inability to understand the outcome of a nuclear bomb before one was dropped on Japan. Our mindset about cyberwar, Hayden said, "has the whiff of 1945. It's a new class of weapon, never before used."

How could a digital nuke possibly be worse than a real nuke? First, consider how we're teeing up a disaster by moving every aspect of life and commerce online while having no way to



BY  
**KEVIN MANEY**  
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IMAGINECHINA/AP



**HACKED OFF:** Technicians at Recovery Key Laboratory in Chengdu, China, released anti-ransomware software to recover files encrypted by the WannaCry cyberattack in mid-May, which may have come from North Korea.



completely protect those systems. It's kind of like putting your family and all your possessions into a house that has hippie beads for a front door—in a high-crime area with no police force.

We've long relied on computers and software to run big systems like power grids, airports, banks, factories and the military. Now, we're putting billions of Internet of Things devices into our homes, cars, streetlights, toys, clothes, pets and more. Those devices were the point of weakness that allowed hackers last fall to knock out major web outlets like PayPal and Spotify in the U.S. We're doing most of our professional work these days on software and apps, talking with colleagues on Slack, shopping on Amazon, finding friends with benefits on Tinder. We're on the brink of filling our roads with self-driving cars while robot drones zip overhead delivering pizza. All of it is connected, and all of it is vulnerable.

Meanwhile, cyberattacks keep intensifying, and security experts can't stay ahead of the hackers. The latest, in mid-May, was the worst so far. The ransomware affected up to 99 countries. It froze hospitals in the U.K.; infected Russia's Interior Ministry and biggest bank, Sberbank; shut down parts of Spain's Telefónica; and fried millions of Windows computers in China and India. North Korea may have launched that attack, and lots of scary nations large and small are sponsoring increasingly sophisticated hacking operations. "We used to worry about Russia and China taking down our infrastructure," said Stewart Baker, a former general counsel for the National Security Agency, in an interview for the Pew Research Center. "Now, we have to worry about Iran and Syria and North Korea. Next up: Hezbollah and Anonymous."

The constant hacks have left us all with an amorphous sense of dread. We're told that we have to protect ourselves with encryption and two-factor authentication, which is not heartening. It's like being informed that you really ought to dig a moat around your house and line up archers on your roof because the Visigoths are coming, and no one can help you—so, good luck!

Yet securing your stuff will be worthless if a rogue nation or group launches an attack that cripples global digital networks. Just imagine how that would go. Let's say you're in a city.

In a flash, you have no communication. Even if your laptop and cellphone still work, they can't get to anything—not Gmail or WhatsApp or Facebook. President Donald Trump can't even get on Twitter to call the attack "bad!"

You head outside and realize everything's jammed because the traffic lights are off and public transportation can't move. Airports ground all

## CYBERWAR "HAS THE WHIFF OF 1945. IT'S A NEW CLASS OF WEAPON, NEVER BEFORE USED."


flights. Even satellites have been rendered useless—you can't get on GPS to find your way.

Go to the store, and it will take only cash because the gadget to swipe cards won't work. People empty the shelves, worried about supplies running out. The ATM won't work, and your credit card is worthless without the technology behind it. You can't even be sure whether your bank account has been hacked and cleaned out.

Now, you're worried about food, water, safety. Power goes out because the utility's systems crash. The police are in turmoil, overwhelmed and unable to communicate. Hospital systems go down. Patients in critical health relying on automated devices start dying. Financial markets freeze, and investors panic. The government can't get information to people and may not be operating at all.

And this is happening in every city and every town in every country.

How long before people turn on one another? Before they break into houses that look rich and stocked with food? Before guns come out of drawers and safes? Before fires get started and mobs rage out of control? How bad does it get if systems are so damaged they can't be turned on for weeks, months, years? It seems crazy, but such a scenario looks more plausible with every escalating cyberattack.

Maybe Kim Jong Un is really wily, and this whole missile thing is just sleight of hand. While Trump and other leaders focus on rockets, we can only hope Kim and his brainwashed 20-something nerds in a well-guarded military bunker haven't developed their real weapon of mass destruction on a MacBook. 



## SUSHI ROLLED

The widespread mislabeling of fish means consumers are eating a lot of bait and switch

IN A DIMINUTIVE shack in Eugene, Oregon, in a neighborhood that until recently was a better place to find meth than a decent meal, Taro Kobayashi is carving into the pinkest block of tuna I've ever seen.

Kobayashi is the owner and head chef of a restaurant called Mamé. He seats no more than 19 people at once, and if you didn't make a reservation, you might not squeeze in until after 10 p.m. The cramp and the call ahead are worth it, though, because Kobayashi buys fish only if he knows precisely where it came from—the fisherman, the boat and the body of water. He doesn't buy fish unless it's in season, no matter how much his customers might ask for it. He can tell you all about why it's better to wait five days to serve tuna (that gives the flesh time to recover from the stress of being caught) or how the yellow tint on the seared Nantucket scallops indicates they're female. Knowing his fish is "really important," Kobayashi says. When asked about the mystery meat served at most sushi bars across the world, he says, "You guys deserve better."

You might assume his obsessive focus on quality ingredients would be common in a cuisine that features *raw fish*, but it isn't. Even after a glut of media reports last year on the publication of an alarming book that exposed a rampant practice of fake fish being sold as real fish, complacent consumers are still being duped. In November, the nonprofit seafood sustainability advocate Oceana

released a report updating its review of seafood fraud globally. The news was mostly bad. On average, the percentage of seafood mislabeled has hovered around 30 percent for the past decade, according to an analysis of 51 peer-reviewed studies published since 2005. "The snapper is 87 percent wrong?" says Kobayashi, referring to a stat from an earlier version of Oceana's report. "That's insane. We should be outraged, as a nation."

The industry is changing but slowly. Sushi heads are newly alert, and the industry is scrambling to meet their demand for honestly sourced fish.

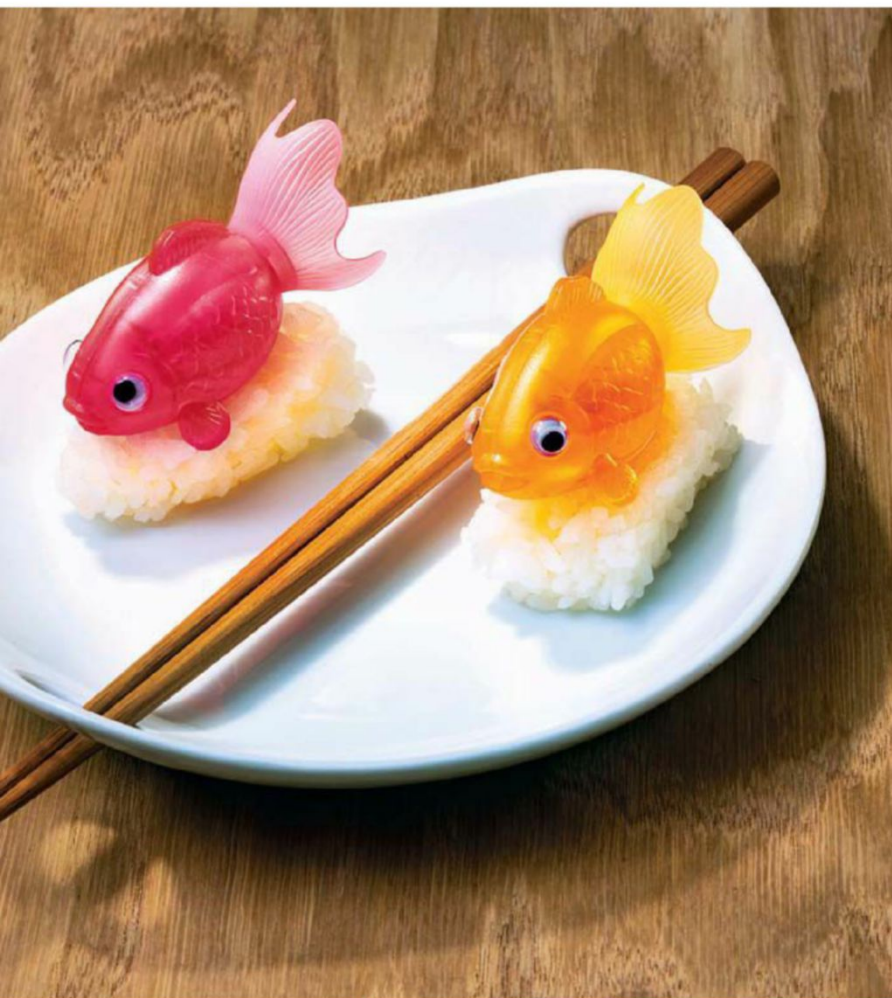
One of the nation's few hubs for traceable seafood is Oregon, especially Portland. At Portland's Bamboo Sushi, every item on the menu is tagged with a different-colored fish icon, signifying the range of sustainability and traceability offered. Bamboo is one of only a handful of sushi spots nationwide that hips its patrons to what they're eating and where it came from. The reason that's so rare, says founder Kristofor Lofgren, is because stocking quality fish is tough. "Most sushi restaurants are mom-and-pop," Lofgren says. "They need fish. They call a local distributor. They ask, 'What do you have?' and the distributor asks, 'What can you spend?' They end up with an acceptable medium range."

That medium range wasn't acceptable for Lofgren; he wanted all of his fish to be high quality and reasonably priced, so he negotiated long-term deals with the best boats he could find.

BY  
**WINSTON ROSS**  
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**SOMETHING FISHY:** There's no tracking system for the thousands of fishing boats, and as a catch goes from deck to dock to processing plant, at any point it could have its label switched.

Building his own supply chain took 18 months, but in doing so he overcame the biggest obstacle to cleaning up seafood fraud: a massive and massively complex supply chain. Ninety-two percent of the seafood consumed in America is imported, says Phil Werdal, CEO of Seattle-based Trace Register, which provides a food traceability system for clients in 40 countries. Much of what's landed at ports around the world comes from tens of thousands of individual fishermen. There's no tracking system for all these trollers and trawlers. As a catch goes from deck to dock to processing plant to refrigerated truck, it could at any point have its label switched. Buyers with a little leverage can get close enough to the dock to ensure they get what they're paying for, but small sushi restaurants can't.

In Italy, 82 percent of the samples Oceana took of perch, grouper and swordfish were mislabeled, mostly at grocery stores and restaurants. Asian catfish, a white-fleshed fish, serves as an impostor for 18 different kinds of more expensive fish, from perch to grouper. A study from UCLA and Loyola Marymount University found that nearly half of all sushi in Los Angeles is mislabeled, based on

samples of 26 restaurants between 2012 and 2015.

The seafood industry is slowly responding to concerns about fraud. In 2016, President Barack Obama started a Seafood Import Monitoring Program, which (unless the new administration quashes it) takes effect January 2018. The program beefs up requirements for documenting seafood brought into the U.S., which could one day lead to more hands-on inspections to ensure

## NEARLY HALF OF ALL SUSHI IN LOS ANGELES IS MISLABELED.

what's in the box matches the label. The program doesn't cover enough kinds of fish, says Oceana's Beth Lowell, but it's "better than nothing."

In January, the National Fisheries Institute sued the federal government to block the monitoring program. Institute spokesman Gavin Gibbons tells *Newsweek* there are regulations perfectly equipped to police fake seafood. They just need to be enforced. In 2016, investigators with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office caught a restaurant in Northern California passing off farmed tilapia as petrale sole. The penalty: a \$120,000 fine. In 2015, the city attorney in San Diego fined eight sushi restaurants for deceiving customers.

Absent enforcement, providing high-quality fish seems to work for restaurants. In 2008, the year Bamboo Sushi opened its first restaurant in Portland, it served 30,000 patrons. Eight years later, that number was 360,000. Lofgren's customers don't ask as much about where the fish comes from as they did a few years ago, he says, but that might be because they now trust his restaurants. As for the mom-and-pops, "they still don't care," he says. What they care about is "are the customers coming in or not?"

The volume of catch that's certified by the Marine Stewardship Council has risen by 6 percent since 2014, while the number of processors, restaurants and caterers who participate in the program grew from 2,879 to 3,334. Which is to say there's a reason Mamé is packed most nights. "I want people's kids to have this tuna," Kobayashi says, pointing to a verdant filet of Pacific bigeye, "caught right between us and Hawaii. It's my job to know what's the best." ■



## NOBODY HAS TO DIE

The two hepatitis scourges are both preventable and curable. So why are so many people still dying?

**IN TERMS** of global killers, hepatitis now trumps HIV and equals tuberculosis. According to a new report by the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 1.34 million people died from hepatitis B and C in 2015, and about 325 million people are living with these infections. The numbers are particularly disconcerting because these viral illnesses are both preventable and treatable. Yet there is reason to be optimistic that the tide of these infectious and fatal diseases could now be forced to recede.

Hepatitis B (HBV) and C (HCV) are two distinct viruses that colonize the liver. Babies born in countries with high rates of HBV are particularly at risk for the disease: Infected mothers can transmit the pathogen to infants during birth. Sex and needle sharing are also common routes for the virus to travel. HBV can live outside the body for up to seven days, so touching dried blood containing the virus—a common hospital scenario—can result in an infection.

HCV also finds dirty needles particularly conducive for moving from one host to another. After conquering the globe primarily along slave trade routes through the 18th century, the virus has more recently been hitching rides via unsterilized needles used for medical purposes and the injection of illegal drugs.

Both HBV and HCV share the frustrating trait of silence: People who become infected may not know they are playing host to a contagious

disease for decades. And when the virus does make itself known, whether through the liver damage disease known as cirrhosis or through liver cancer, the disease is too advanced for treatment to be of any use.

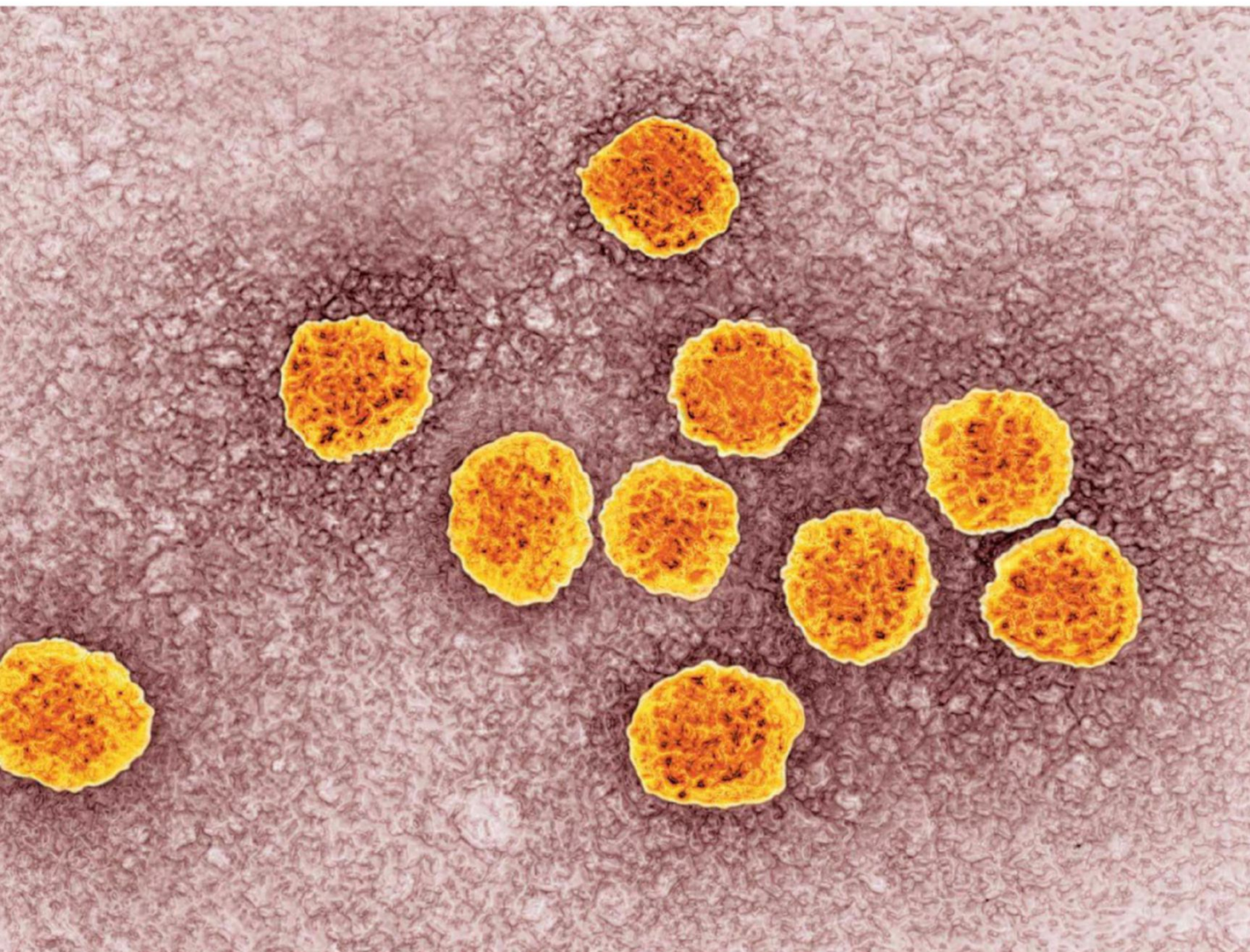
In May 2016, the WHO called for the elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030. Reaching that goal requires a 90 percent reduction in new infections and a 65 percent reduction in deaths from these diseases from current levels. How to eliminate hepatitis is clear—but *if* hepatitis will be eliminated is not.

**A VACCINE** for HBV has been available since 1982, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began recommending universal infant immunization in 1991. Some countries have included the HBV vaccine in routine immunizations since the early 1980s; others started doing so only in the 2000s. According to the new WHO report, 84 percent of children born in 2015 received the three recommended doses of the HBV vaccine. And since the vaccine was introduced (the date varies by country), the proportion of children under 5 who have become infected fell from 4.7 percent to 1.3 percent. However, only about one-third of children worldwide are receiving the first dose of the vaccine at birth, leaving a window of risk for new infections.

Addressing HBV requires not just preventing new infections but also treating the current ones.

BY  
**JESSICA WAPNER**  
[@jessicawapner](https://twitter.com/jessicawapner)





**MOVING TARGETS:**  
There is no vaccine  
for the hepatitis  
C virus, which  
mutates extremely  
fast in the body.

Most of the 257 million people living with the disease are adults who became infected before the vaccine was available. Nearly half of the HBV population lives in a region of the world that the WHO calls “western Pacific,” which includes Australia and China. Sixty million people across Africa are infected with the virus.

Treatment rates for HBV are currently too low to eradicate the disease. Part of the problem is that most people with the disease don’t know they have it. Only 22 million people infected with the virus—9 percent of the HBV population—have received a medical diagnosis. Without the diagnosis, there’s no treatment. And without treatment, there’s no stopping the continued spread of the disease. Access to care is also problematic. Hepatitis B can be controlled with tenofovir, a drug also used to treat HIV. But in 2015, only 8 percent of people diagnosed with HBV were treating their disease.

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**“AUTHORITIES NEED  
TO BE ENCOURAGED  
TO MAKE GOOD PUBLIC  
HEALTH DECISIONS  
BASED ON EVIDENCE,  
NOT IDEOLOGY.”**

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No vaccine exists for hepatitis C. The disease is caused by a virus that mutates extremely fast. Immunizing bodies against a future infection has so far proved impossible because the part of the viral genome that guides replication inside a new host is a constantly moving target. But HCV is now curable. Decades of research finally led to





drugs, available since 2013, that completely push the virus out of the body. About three months of daily treatment with one of these “direct-acting antivirals” leaves a person virus-free. These medications are notoriously expensive, but after an outcry the manufacturers have agreed to lower the prices in low-income countries. In some countries, the WHO report notes, a full course of the medication now costs \$200 (compared with about \$80,000 in the U.S.). But the WHO found that in 2015 only 7 percent of people diagnosed with HCV had started treatment.

In other words, these diseases are preventable but not prevented; curable but not cured. Why?

One problem is the continued use of unsterilized needles by health care workers. That cause is surprising because it has been recognized for so long. Egypt became the country with the world’s highest rate of hepatitis C because a public health effort to treat schistosomiasis, a parasite living in the Nile, using an injected medication ended up spreading hepatitis C through villages along the riverbank. But despite the well-known dangers of reusing needles, the practice persists. In 2010, unsterilized needles led to 315,000 new HCV and 1.6 million new HBV infections. Katherine Gibney, an infectious disease physician at the Doherty Institute at Royal Melbourne Hospital, says health care workers aren’t being trained properly.

Laith Abu-Raddad, a professor of health policy and research and an infectious disease epidemiologist at Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, says governments must improve efforts to halt these diseases in both Egypt and Pakistan, where HCV rates are also high. “We have the tools to largely eliminate this infection within a decade or so,” says Abu-Raddad, but “the public health response continues to lag.” Starting in 2014, the curative treatment for hepatitis C has been free for people between the ages of 18 and 70. But if the use of unsterilized needles persists, new infections will of course continue. He hopes that health care workers in Egypt and Pakistan will begin using Smart Syringes, single-use needles

that the WHO says should be used by health care workers worldwide. Such attention is needed worldwide. Africa and the eastern Mediterranean carry the highest burden of HBV cases, but Europe is heavily infested with hepatitis C. And the raging opioid epidemic is also sickening people with HCV in the United States.

But even if every medical facility in the world were spic-and-span and used only sterilized needles, the viruses would persist. That’s because injection drug use is a major risk factor, and drug users typically do not have open access to clean needles. Providing sterile paraphernalia to drug users could help, says Gibney. “Authorities need to be encouraged to make good public health decisions based on evidence, not ideology,” she notes. In other words, withholding clean needles from drug users on the basis of opposing drug use is standing in the way of eradicating hepatitis.

So are cultural attitudes toward drug users, says Suzanne Wait, managing director of the Health Policy Partnership, a consulting group. “Stigma and discrimination related to having hepatitis are a particular concern,” she says. Because these diseases are common among

## IF EVERY MEDICAL FACILITY IN THE WORLD WERE SPIC-AND-SPAN AND USED ONLY STERILIZED NEEDLES, THE VIRUS WOULD STILL PERSIST.

injection drug users, getting tested for the disease is akin to acknowledging drug abuse. And many people with drug dependency could find adhering to medical care difficult. Patients need not only testing, says Wait, but also follow-up to ensure they are receiving proper care.

Despite these barriers, the WHO report strikes an optimistic note about reaching the 2030 eradication goal because vaccine and treatment services are, on average, improving. That improvement is partly due to the long-delayed acknowledgment of these diseases. “The world has only recently expressed its alarm about the burden of viral hepatitis,” writes WHO Director-General Margaret Chan in the new report. Others are less certain. “Deaths due to hepatitis B and C will continue to increase,” says Gibney, “until treatment is available to the millions of people who need it.” **N**



**H2O, NO!** While studying how much the price of sodas is dropping globally, researchers found that sugar-sweetened beverages are cheaper than bottled water.



## POP GOES THE WORLD

### THE WORLD IS DROWNING IN SODA, WHICH IS GETTING CHEAPER AND MORE PLENTIFUL

**AS MORE** people worldwide adopt a Western diet, soda is becoming a staple. That's great news if you're sitting on a big block of Mountain Dew stock, but scientists say guzzling sugar-sweetened beverages is a surefire way to put on weight, thereby increasing risk for such chronic and fatal medical conditions as diabetes and some cancers. Despite that, sodas are spreading. A new study in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's online journal *Preventing Chronic Diseases* finds that sugar-sweetened beverages are more plentiful and affordable all over the world.

The American Cancer Society study found that in 79 of the 82 countries reviewed, the proportion of income needed to purchase sugar-sweetened beverages declined, and the real price of soda dropped in 56 of the 82 countries. (Researchers used Coca-Cola "as a proxy for all sugar-sweetened beverages because it is the most globally recognized sugar-sweetened beverage brand and largely homogeneous.")

The researchers also found that

sugar-sweetened beverages are cheaper than bottled water.

Jeffrey Drope, deputy director for the American Cancer Society's Research Program and a co-author of the study, says, "If [sodas] continue to become more affordable, then most certainly consumption will continue to increase," which will lead to obesity problems and an increase in noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes and cancer.

Amanda Rosseter, a spokeswoman for the Coca-Cola Co., disputes that. "The authors mistakenly conclude that increased affordability of sugar-sweetened beverages will inevitably lead to higher consumption, which real-world experience disproves," she says. "In areas such as the U.S., U.K. and EU, where these types of beverages are most affordable, consumption is actually steady or declining. At the same time, obesity rates in many of these countries continue to rise."

In recent years, the soda titans have contended with bad press, including reports that many of them fund studies that aim to show soda isn't all that bad for

your health and that it doesn't matter what foods and beverages people consume for their daily calorie intake (even if it's refined sugar) as long as high-calorie food and drink is counteracted by physical activity.

"We're evolving our business and taking a number of actions globally: We're reducing sugar in our beverages because we agree that too much sugar isn't good for anyone," Rosseter tells *Newsweek*. "We're making our low and no-sugar drinks more available and easier to find."

The company says it reduced sugar content in more than 200 drinks worldwide in 2016 and plans to more than double that number this year. It also introduced smaller packaging in many markets. Coca-Cola claims these efforts are far more effective than a soda tax, which Drope and his co-authors endorsed.

Mexico was one of the first countries to try a soda tax. In 2014, it tacked a 10 percent tax on sugar-sweetened beverages; consumption went down 5 percent the first year and nearly 10 percent the second year, according to Fabio da Silva Gomes, regional adviser on nutrition for the Pan American Health Organization, part of the World Health Organization.

"This was even more effective among the lower socioeconomic levels, the ones we really need to target better and improve their diets," Gomes says, "because they're the ones who are very vulnerable and the ones that are more strongly and aggressively targeted by the industry to consume those products." ■

# WEEKEND

CULTURE, TRAVEL AND OTHER GOOD NEWS

## THE PLACE TO BE

### Sydney, Australia Fleet Foxes go back to the future

**T**HE FIRST TIME Seattle band Fleet Foxes performed at the Sydney Opera House, they were surprised by the concert hall's intimacy. "You have an idea about a building and the architecture," says songwriter and frontman Robin Pecknold. "The acoustics were really amazing, and it felt close, which I wasn't expecting."

After a five-year hiatus from performing, the band will boldly return to the stage, with four dates under the vast sails of the opera house, as part of Vivid Live, Sydney's annual festival of light, music and ideas that spills out across the harbors, botanical gardens and the entire city. The opera house refers to its part in the festival as "the centerpiece of its year-round music program." Vivid certainly conforms to the original aims of the building, which opened in 1973 to promote all forms of art along with "scientific research into, and the encouragement of, new and improved forms of entertainment and methods of presentation," according to its mission statement.

Fleet Foxes' third album, *Crack-Up*, is named after an F. Scott Fitzgerald collection of essays and

other writings, but it also reflects the breakdown Pecknold experienced after the experimental folk-rock band's meteoric rise. The title also fits with the record's multilayered sonic journey, mixing genres and textures with vocal harmonies reminiscent of Simon and Garfunkel. So as not to give away any surprises ahead of the festival, Pecknold talks tantalizingly of guest musicians, lighting, projections and "sculptural elements unique to the Vivid set." The show will present new songs, he says, "interwoven with old songs. But it begins and ends with the beginning and ending of the new album."

Beginnings and endings are prominent in Pecknold's mind. Appearing at the Sydney Opera House marked the Fleet Foxes' end of touring their 2011 album, *Helplessness Blues*. "So when they asked us to play Vivid Live, we really liked that it was going back to where it ended before, to start it up again." —AMY FLEMING ■

Fleet Foxes are at Vivid Live, Sydney Opera House, May 26-29. *Crack-Up* will be released on Nonesuch June 16. The festival runs across the city until June 17. [LIVERCOATES.COM](http://LIVERCOATES.COM)





+  
ONCE MORE  
WITH FEELING:  
Fleet Foxes return  
to the Sydney  
Opera House after  
a five-year hiatus  
from performing.



# Mozart and Me Italian opera director Jacopo Spirei on a special relationship

**J**ACOPO SPIREI'S belief in a formula for social change—that if there was more opera in the world, there would be less crime—has fueled his passion for an art form that he sees not as an elitist luxury but as a human necessity. Individuals thwarted in love and life, he observes, lash out at things they cannot understand, accept or change. Opera can hold up a mirror that allows people to see that in themselves. “Self-deception is a most powerful thing,” he says, sipping coffee in the suitably theatrical setting of London’s gothic St. Pancras Renaissance Hotel, “and opera is full of self-deception.”

Spirei’s latest production, Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, with which he makes his debut at the San Francisco Opera from June 4 to 30, has its own fair share of self-deceivers—among them the lascivious title character, Don Juan, and the many lovers deluded by their infatuation with him. Spirei is a devotee of the 18th-century composer and by next year will have directed three of his operas at the Salzburger Landestheater.

Spirei’s *Giovanni* in San Francisco is fellow Italian Ildebrando D’Arcangelo, something of a go-to Don since he first sang the role in Berlin and Vienna in 2010; at Milan’s La Scala the following year; and then in Italy’s Verona, London, San Diego, Los Angeles and Salzburg, Austria. The two have not worked together before, but the intensive rehearsal period makes short work of introductions. “We’re almost like animals, sniffing each other,” says Spirei. “In the U.S., most theater is privately funded, so you don’t always have the luxury of six weeks’ rehearsal.”

The director’s road to the prestigious opera house was long and winding. Now 43, he was raised in Florence, where he still lives with his wife, Norwegian soprano Christel Elisabeth Smith. As a child, Spirei absorbed arias his grandmother sung at home, believing them to be folk songs. He read classical studies and learned about the Renaissance. “Growing up in Florence,” he says, “the culture is so deep, you end up knowing Dante without meaning to.”

Oddly, it was a teenage friendship with the frontman of a progressive-rock band—who took formal singing lessons to which Spirei tagged along—and later their venturing to the opera together (at 21, Verdi’s *Macbeth* was his first) that introduced him to the repertoire that is now his daily bread. At the time, his father, a government official and dedicated horseman, ran equestrian events that attracted English-speaking tourists. Spirei, a natural linguist, picked up the language and was recruited by the University of South Carolina to help run its singing summer schools in Cortona, Italy.

At 24, he headed for London, joining hard-up hostellers sleeping 25 to a room and skipping meals to buy the cheapest tickets at every theater he could squeeze into. “The Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, English National Opera, for the Italian repertoire sung in English—everything,” he recalls. “And Mozart. There are so many memories connected with him. He has been a companion walking by me.”

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“THERE ARE SO MANY MEMORIES... MOZART HAS BEEN A COMPANION.”

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Bit by bit, working—often for nothing—on the London opera scene, he was offered a job as an assistant to the internationally renowned and innovative opera director Graham Vick. In the summers, Vick brought him to the refined country estate of Glyndebourne, near the south coast of England, where the opera house set in verdant gardens attracts world-class artists. Here, after initially assisting Vick, Spirei went on to direct revivals of his mentor’s productions, among them a landmark *Eugene Onegin* in 2008, originally staged in 1994 and considered one of the finest readings of Tchaikovsky’s tragedy.

Vick says their partnership, which lasted more than 12 years and included 30 productions, was symbiotic: “I had the consistency of having him at my side all the time.” He applauds Spirei’s willingness to undertake such a long apprenticeship—less common in England than Italy. “In the end, we didn’t even have ▶

BY  
CLAUDIA  
PRITCHARD  
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BEN MCMAHON



+

**MASTERCLASS:**  
Director Jacopo  
Spirei is making his  
debut at San  
Francisco Opera  
with *Don Giovanni*.



to talk,” says Spirei. “You need to go into the brain of the director you’re working for and forget about yourself, which is something that then transfers into your own directing.”

In his early days as a solo director, Spirei’s production budget was so tight he had to pick outfits from a costume hire shop and design his own sets. Now he has access to greater resources, and his experience working at different houses (in Copenhagen, Denmark; Oslo, Norway; and Vienna and beyond) has given him a chance to sample differences in opera production from country to country, particularly the varying lengths of rehearsal. Although more work in Italy lies ahead—notably *Falstaff* for the Verdi festival at Parma in October—Spirei is critical of his country’s attitude to opera, an art form invented there 400 years ago. “In Italy, it’s all about putting on a pretty picture. In Britain, it’s more about the drama.” As for that all-important, if variable, rehearsal period, “I had 19 days to rehearse for one *Così* in Italy,” he says, referring to Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*. “My record is Rossini’s *La Cenerentola* in a week. But putting on a show is not like directing traffic. It’s how to lift the music off the page.”

## “THERE’S AN ENORMOUS COST TO SOCIETY IN A LACK OF THE ARTS.”

Partly as a reaction to that peculiarly Italian “park-and-bark” school of singing, Spirei has spent 15 years developing his own idea for a company, a place to “freely experiment” with both traditional and contemporary operas in unconventional spaces and to mix singers of all nationalities. “I’ve always felt the need to create a home for my work,” he says, one “not bound by the amount of tickets sold.”

In the meantime, there is *Don Giovanni*, a cause for celebration at a time when cuts to the arts are happening in various countries, including the U.S. and Britain. It’s a development Spirei is watching anxiously, and not for the reasons you might suspect: While it will certainly mean fewer opportunities for opera directors, it also contributes to what he sees as growing disillusionment among the young. “Mine is the first generation that was meant to inherit the world but instead inherited chaos. Then you have people who don’t understand why they are so disappointed or react with physical violence,” Spirei says. “There’s an enormous cost to society in a lack of the arts. You just don’t see the results for 15 or 20 years.” **N**

*Don Giovanni*, San Francisco Opera, June 4 to 30; [SFOPERA.COM](http://SFOPERA.COM)



### THE TASTER

## Little Donkey, Cambridge, Massachusetts

For a slow pack animal, Little Donkey sure gets around. The acclaimed restaurant in Cambridge, Massachusetts, jumps from cuisine to cuisine with the kind of reckless abandon only the best chefs can risk attempting. Fortunately, its founders, the James Beard Award-winning chefs Ken Oringer and Jamie Bissonnette, are two of the finest. Of their five restaurants—including Boston’s Coppa and branches of Toro in New York, Boston and Bangkok—Little Donkey is the naughty, younger sibling, breaking all the rules in the sweetest of ways.

**IN THE ROOM:** It’s a credit to Little Donkey’s food that few reviewers wasted precious page space describing their surroundings. *The Boston Globe* informs us that at night “the gaping dining room, all exposed brick and ductwork and soaring ceilings, is dark, loud, mobbed and throbbing with energy.” That’s about it, really. May we point you toward Instagram?

**ON THE TABLE:** You can be greedy, but you better share—small plates dominate the menu here. *Boston* magazine went into raptures over the Turkish ravioli, or *manti*: “In their noble simplicity, their quiet grandeur, they were perfect.” The superfans at the *Globe* delighted in the raw offerings—tuna poke and Wagyu steak tartare—but reserved the greatest love for, of all things, corn made “decadent from bone marrow, mozzarella and Parmesan.” CBS Boston, meanwhile, turned into big kids, devouring the “impossibly crispy” fried chicken sandwich and “show-stopper burger” that blogger Dan Whalen described to food website Eater as “like crack.”

**IN BRIEF:** Try a bit of everything—the *manti* are a must—but if on a hot date, steer clear of the BLT lettuce wraps. Less hot mess, more actual mess. —MIRREN GIDDA **N**

Around \$75 per person for dinner (including drinks and service); [LITTLEDONKEYBOS.COM](http://LITTLEDONKEYBOS.COM)



# New Japanese design Teruhiro Yanagihara picks the best products from small makers

Teruhiro Yanagihara is one of the leading designers and creative directors in Japan, turning his hand to everything from ultra-contemporary accessories, ceramics, glass, lighting and furniture to the interiors of shops, restaurants and hotels. In a shop and gallery on a floor in the building that contains his Osaka studio, he applies his fine eye for detail to a perfectly

attuned selection of Japanese craft and design items. He chooses beautiful objects by small makers who demonstrate exceptional technique and expert craftsmanship but don't necessarily know how to bring their work to market. Here, he introduces us to three of his current favorites from the shop.

—MAX FRASER ■



## TY SQUARE BOWL IN PLAIN GRAY

By Teruhiro Yanagihara for 1616/Arita Japan

"Pottery from the town of Arita in Kyushu is famous," Yanagihara says, "but it has limited appeal outside of Japan. I was invited to help redefine its image by working on a contemporary collection. Producing ceramics with perfectly straight and sharp edges is difficult, and this range shows off the exceptional skills in Arita. The image of their ceramics is high-end, so we named this collection Standard because I wanted it to be used for daily life. This unglazed version also celebrates the natural gray tint of the porcelain that was first discovered in the region in 1616."

¥1,700-¥3,800 (\$15-£34)

## PLATE 220 IN BLUE

By Kueng Caputo for 2016

"This is from a porcelain collection by 16 international designers created as part of a project supported by Arita's local prefecture. The designers were matched with different potters and challenged to push their skills. This piece, by Swiss designers Kueng Caputo, is incredibly difficult to make. There is only one craftsman who can hand-spray these objects with the perfect gradation. The color changes after it has been fired, so a lot can go wrong in the making!"

¥10,000 (\$90)

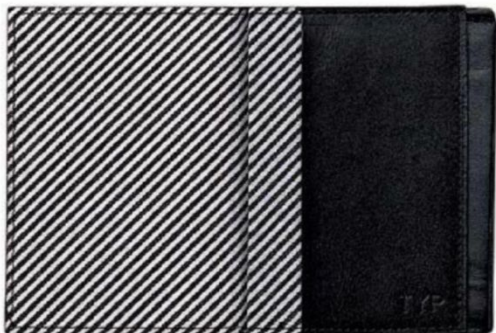


## NO. 2643 WALLET/CARD HOLDER

By Teruhiro Yanagihara for TYP

"TYP, the producer of this wallet, has always made leather goods for other brands but has a number of techniques the company was keen to show off under its own high-end label. This range demonstrates their skills in working in very thin leather made from a technique that involves splitting the thickness of the hide. The different dimensions in the range are based on pre-existing paper sizes—this one is A6 for holding cards and coins; their functions change as the size incrementally increases."

¥13,000 (\$117)



All prices exclude tax; [TERUHIROYANAGIHARA.JP/SHOP/](http://TERUHIROYANAGIHARA.JP/SHOP/)



## COFFEE TABLE

# Modern Master

**WILLEM DE KOONING** made paintings that were bold, boundary-changing and dripping in energy. The Dutch artist, who had stowed away on a ship to America in 1927, emerged as part of the postwar Action school in New York City, alongside such contemporaries as Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. But although his work has since reached record auction prices of up to \$300 million, there's a sense that perhaps he hasn't been given his critical due.

Phaidon's new monograph provides an opportunity to reassess his place in modern art. Indeed, Judith Zilczer's thorough book highlights how de Kooning even helped define what modern art is: In 1951, he called for art as a way of life that reflected experience. Now, he is best known for abstracted images of women: pink, fleshy, violently painted, complicated—all breasts, open legs and lipstick, like a painted fusion of Picasso and Marilyn Monroe. But the book, which reminds us of his breadth—from his early figurative work to later linear, more minimal compositions—also demonstrates that by the time he died, in 1997 at the age of 92, de Kooning had both captured the public imagination and left an important stamp on art history. —**FRANCESCA GAVIN** ■

**MAN OF ACTION:** De Kooning's *Untitled XXI* (1982), from the Philadelphia Museum of Art.



## A WAY OF LIVING: THE ART OF WILLEM DE KOONING

By Judith Zilczer

Phaidon, out now, \$70 (£54)

## BEDSIDE TABLE

# Former U.K. Ambassador Sir Paul Lever on John le Carré's *The Secret Pilgrim*

"*The Secret Pilgrim* by John le Carré is more a collection of vignettes than a novel. George Smiley, the principal character in most of his early books, comes back from retirement to talk to new British Intelligence Service recruits about the business of spying. What follows is a series of stories about espionage during the Cold War and how it affected the agents involved.

"It came out in 1990, as the Cold War was ending, when I was in Vienna negotiating an arms treaty with the Soviet Union. I was never a spook, but as the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, I was what you might call a spymaster. *The Secret Pilgrim* is the best book I've read about what it was like.

"Le Carré addresses the issue of trust. What does it do to people who spend their lives in a world dominated by betrayal? When do you judge an agent is no longer safe and pull them out? Or do you take the cynical view that if they get caught and killed, that's their problem?

"The book also reveals le Carré's feeling that we should have shown Russia more respect after the Cold War. I think he would say it's our fault we've ended up with Putin." —**AS TOLD TO AMY FLEMING**

*Berlin Rules: Europe and the German Way* by Paul Lever (I.B. Tauris) is out May 30 (\$30).



# A Matter of Life and Death

## Edward Docx makes sense of an ending

**EDWARD DOCX'S FOURTH NOVEL** is a love story—not between a young couple but between Larry Lasker, a “courageous but cowardly, wonderful but terrible” man in his late 60s, and his youngest son, Lou. Lou is the child of Larry’s happy second marriage and able to overlook his father’s shortcomings. But Ralph and Jack, the sons of Larry’s first wife, cannot forgive their father for his brutal abandonment of their mother. They long to excavate the past, to force their father to admit how cruelly he behaved. Now time is running out. Larry is in the late stages of a motor

neuron disease and has resolved to end his life at Dignitas, a Swiss nonprofit that assists terminally ill patients with suicide.

*Let Go My Hand* covers four days during which Larry and his sons travel in a cramped camper van through Europe to Switzerland, constantly interacting, thrashing out the past and examining, in Docx’s words, all the “complex crosscurrents of love in a family and, within those currents, all kinds of human emotion, ranging from hero worship to detestation.” Docx’s choice of setting was deliberate. “As well as a love story, I

wanted to write a road movie,” he says, speaking on the phone from Crete. “They seem two very different things, but oddly they came together nicely. Ever since *The Canterbury Tales*—perhaps the first road movie—writers have understood the advantages of confining characters in a given space.”

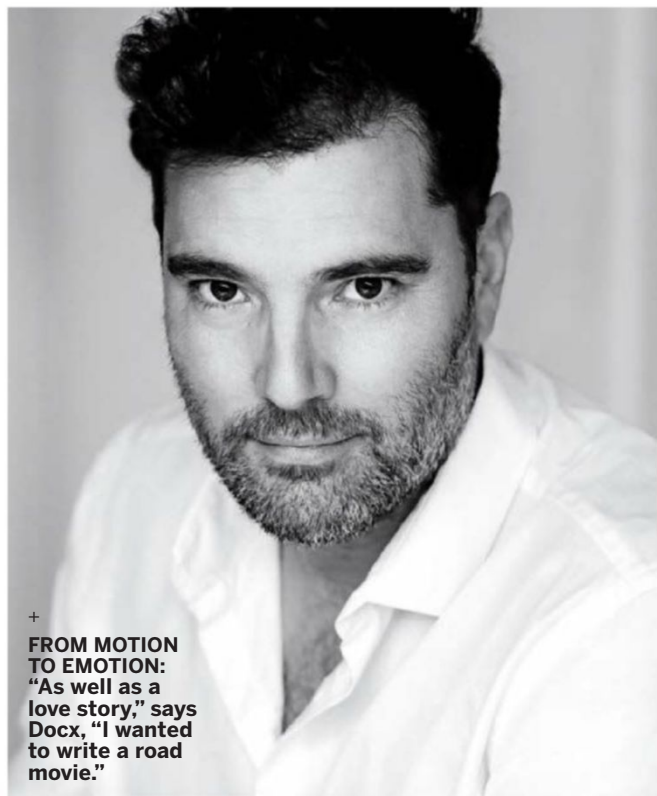
Despite, or perhaps because of, his Catholic upbringing in the north of England, Docx is doggedly unreligious. As Larry travels steadily toward death, Docx was determined to keep “the ludicrousness of Christianity” out of the drama. Yet at various moments in the novel, his four characters all, in their own ways, yearn toward the sacred, and their journey is a kind of pilgrimage—albeit one that might end in suicide. “As human beings,” says Docx, “we are continually preoccupied with matters beyond pure matter. And that gap between the secular and scientific world and the world of something transcendent and folkloric is the place I most like to write about.”

This may sound solemn, but Docx’s prose sparkles with irrepressible humor. Born in 1972, he grew up one of seven children, and though this had its downsides, he feels that being part of a large tribe gave him gifts of “empathy,

sympathy and intuition—a really well-developed sense of people’s interiority,” which enables him to “think inside the minds of characters I’ve created and know what they might find funny.” There are writers like J.M. Coetzee, he says, who “couldn’t tell a joke if you paid them for the rest of their lives. But other writers just can’t stop. I’m more in the latter camp. And I’ve learned that if you leaven serious writing with humor, you can then carry on being serious.”

Will Larry, when he reaches Dignitas, really take his own life? The question looms over the novel almost until the last page. “I’d be grateful if you didn’t give away the answer,” says Docx. “I wrote the book without knowing the ending, and I wanted everyone involved—my characters and my readers—not to know either.”

—MAGGIE FERGUSON



+ FROM MOTION TO EMOTION: “As well as a love story,” says Docx, “I wanted to write a road movie.”

CHARLIE CARTER



**LET GO MY HAND**

By Edward Docx  
Picador, out now,  
£17 (\$22)

**“I GOT YOU, YOU SON OF A BITCH!”** screams one of several interchangeable live-bait humans in *Alien: Covenant*, after dispatching one of those toothy, drooling, beanbag-headed extraterrestrials that—nearly 40 years into one of sci-fi’s most endlessly renewable franchises—don’t look so alien to us anymore.

On the other hand, at least the line indicates that we’re not in the granite-textured solemnity of Ridley Scott’s 2012 prequel, *Prometheus*, anymore. The echo to Sigourney Weaver’s battle cry of “Get away from her, you bitch” clarifies that film’s hitherto cryptic connection to the events of *Alien* and delivers a reference that admits allegiance to the pulpy, 1979 original.

Scott envisioned the first *Alien* as a straight-up science-fiction horror film. But James Cameron’s later *Aliens* steered the franchise into muscled-up action terrain; subsequent directors David Fincher and Jean-Pierre Jeunet each had their own peculiar way with it, the former fashioning proceedings as a grisly prison drama, the latter playing up its dark comedy.



#### THE SCREENING ROOM

## Gross encounters *Alien: Covenant* returns the franchise to horrific, slimy form

Now, returning to the franchise he created, it falls to Scott, after the conflicted genre stew of *Prometheus*—part philosophical treatise, part monster movie—to bring back the horror via slick, slimy gore and jittery jump scares, as those slippery little sons (or daughters) of bitches pop out from every nook, cranny, stomach and spinal column.

As redesigns go, *Alien: Covenant* is not ambitious, but it’s roaringly, repulsively effective. The setup is as simple as *Prometheus* was complicated. In 2014, 10 years after *Prometheus* set its

crew of space voyagers on a lush but forbidding planet, the *Covenant*, a long-haul spacecraft, brings a new human crew in search of habitable land.

Among the travelers are Daniels (Katherine Waterston), a stern, doughty young explorer in the Ellen Ripley mold; Oram (Billy Crudup), a brisk captain whose devout Christian faith is about to face off against some very weird science; and—wait, is that David, the servile, English-voiced android played so vividly by Michael Fassbender in *Prometheus*? No, it’s Walter,

a supposedly more evolved, American-accented model. It turns out that David, with unnerving serenity, is waiting for them when they land—the last film’s only crewmate to have weathered the decade.

Thus begins a tale of two Fassbenders, as the Irish actor—an ambivalent witness to the action in *Prometheus*—emerges as the sinuous central figure of *Covenant*. Human drive and desire have cracked up both Walter’s and David’s synthetic makeup, albeit to somewhat different ends.

*Alien: Covenant*’s terror





**PULP FRICTION:** Waterston stars as Daniels in Scott's latest addition to the *Alien* series.

pinches from more sources than its own franchise, even nodding to the mad scientist legend of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*—and that's about as deep as any responsible critic can wade before hitting hot spoiler waters. Scott front-loads the film with complex theory, including a prologue with hints of what's to come: David, padding around a spartan, ice-white gallery decorated with centuries-old Nativity art, obliquely discussing origin with his aloof creator Weyland (Guy Pearce, briefly reprising his *Prometheus* role). But that sequence feels like a distant memory once *Alien: Covenant* gets its guns out, so to speak, and the buckets of blood, guts and saliva begin sloshing about the screen. The film is at its most rewarding as

an immediate spookhouse ride—forgoing the pristine visuals of *Prometheus* in favor of the grubbier aesthetic of Scott's original film, this time with a choppy alien-cam perspective. The director is a consummate commercial craftsman, adept at slick computer-generated effects, but he also knows the value of a cheap trick.

Scott has his fun through Fassbender, who brings back a curled-lip glimmer of camp to a franchise long mired in murk. Indeed, *Alien: Covenant* houses one of the actor's most fascinating characterizations to date, forging a pair of very real people from two frustrated human facsimiles—and in the case of David, linking him to a cinematic lineage of fey, inscrutable menace that runs from James Mason to Anthony Perkins. "Watch me, I'll do the fingering," he says, leering at his newer model during an android-to-android flute tutorial. This time, in addition to screams, Scott's offering a tagline: In space, no one can hear you giggle. —GUY LODGE

Worldwide releases continue until September; [FOXMOVIES.COM](http://FOXMOVIES.COM)

## RADAR

### Rolling Stoned

AMIR BAR-LEV, the 45-year-old director of *Long Strange Trip*, is right about one thing: You don't have to like the Grateful Dead's music to warm to their story. Indeed, their music, which can sound to an unbeliever's ear like a band trying to cover for the fact that the singer hasn't turned up, may put many off a story worth telling.

Formed in mid-'60s San Francisco, the Dead were always supposed to be too edgy to be popular. However, it was this very rejection of hit singles, predictable set lists, photo sessions and songs that normal humans could dance to that made them popular.

They did tours that lost them fortunes and then made interminable live albums to pay the bills. They went to Egypt to play at the Pyramids purely because they thought it would be cool. While other bands cracked down on bootleggers, the Dead set up an enclosure where anyone could make a recording of their performance. Long before anyone had thought of the

term, they were marking a trail for indie rock.

Fifty years on from their formation, and more than 20 years since the death of their smiling paterfamilias, Jerry Garcia, ended the band's career, their stature continues to transcend mere popularity. They're the nearest rock has to a religious sect, one in which the priests and deacons are as committed to the creed as the worshippers—the self-described "Deadheads"—out there in the congregation.

As well as the surviving band members—Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzmann—Bar-Lev's film calls on road crew, technicians, long-term collaborators, record execs and former girlfriends to bear witness to the idealism of a band whose members were prepared to get onstage without a plan, trusting the hand of improvisation to lift them to higher ground. Like them or not, the Grateful Dead were in a category of one. —DAVID HEPWORTH

'Long Strange Trip'. Amazon Prime Video, from June 9



**GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN:** The Grateful Dead in their hippie heyday.

# PARTING SHOT

## ‘Casemate SK667’ Jane & Louise Wilson, 2006



BY  
**MATTHEW SWEET**  
@DrMatthewSweet

**THIS WEEK'S COLUMN** is brought to you by water, gravel, cement and Hitler. Put them together, and what have you got? Nazi concrete.

Jane and Louise Wilson, the identical twins who share a Turner Prize as well as a birthday, are drawn like a pair of bluebottle flies to the carcasses of totalitarian modernism. They've buzzed around the decayed remains of the Stasi HQ. They've scuttled over the dirty tiles of Chernobyl. But J.G. Ballard, novelist, cult author of *Crash* and *High-Rise*, late high priest of the English apocalypse, beat them to this one: a bulletproof blockhouse implanted by the Germans into the coastline at Urville-

Nacqueville, Normandy, northern France. It was part of the Atlantikwall, a line of defensive battlements stretching from northern Norway to the Pyrenees. Something

THIS LANDSCAPE  
WAS SHAPED  
BY BARBARISM.

for the Allies to smash themselves against.

In 2006, Ballard trudged over the shingle and climbed inside this structure. He peered into the aperture through which anti-tank guns once spat their ordnance. He noted the shell damage, the whorls of ancient excrement, the tang of urine. And he thought of home. "I realized," he wrote, "I was exploring a set of concrete tombs whose dark ghosts haunted the brutalist architecture so popular in Britain in the 1950s."

When Ballard put that line into a piece for *The Guardian*, the Wilsons were inspired to go beachcombing for images of dystopia. The result was a multiscreen installation called *Sealand*, of which this photograph is part.

They've described it as looking like the last shot of *Planet of the Apes*, in which Charlton Heston finds Lady Liberty collapsing on the waterline. Other viewers might think of that broken-backed spaceship from *Alien*. *Star Wars* fans may get other ideas. (In 2015, a gang of artists spray-painted this structure as a vessel downed by Darth Vader's battle fleet, and sent in cosplaying stormtroopers.)

Dream images of science fiction colonizing a landscape shaped by war, shellfire, barbarism. There's an adjective to describe a cultural process like that: *Ballardian*. The word may fall from fashion, but the concept will endure. Longer, perhaps, than concrete. Longer, certainly, than the ideologies, good and evil, that found materiality in water, gravel and cement. ■

*Sealand*, Getty Center, Los Angeles, to July 2; [GETTY.EDU](http://GETTY.EDU). Black-and-white print, edition of four, 71 x 71 inches, £27,000 (\$35,000); [303GALLERY.COM](http://303GALLERY.COM)





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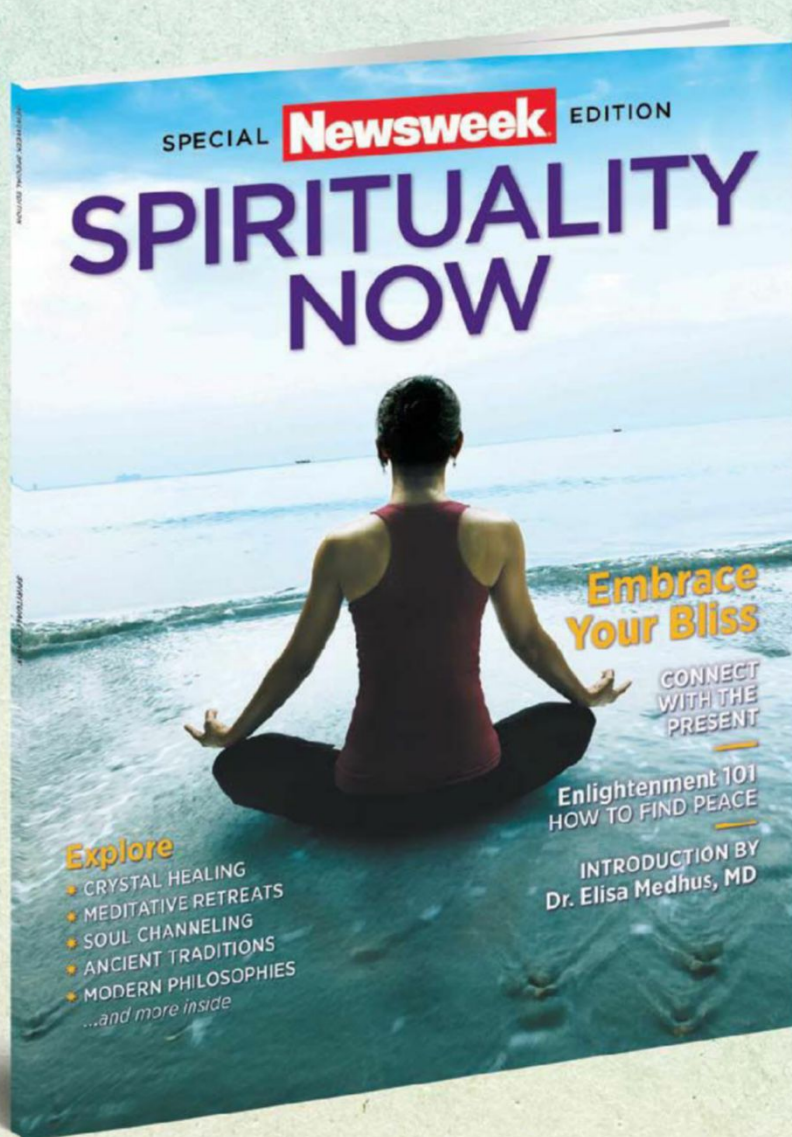
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